A

PRACTICAL VIEW

OF THE

PRESENT STATE OF SLAVERY

IN

THE WEST INDIES.

A

PRACTICAL VIEW

OF THE

PRESENT STATE OF SLAVERY

IN

THE WEST INDIES;

OR,

AN EXAMINATION OF MR. STEPHEN'S

"*SLAVERY OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIA COLONIES:*"

CONTAINING MORE PARTICULARLY

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF

The Negroes in Jamaica:

WITH OBSERVATIONS

ON THE DECREASE OF THE SLAVES SINCE THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE, AND ON THE PROBABLE EFFECTS OF LEGISLATIVE EMANCIPATION:

ALSO,

STRICTURES ON THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, AND ON THE PAMPHLETS OF MR. COOPER AND MR. BICKELL.

BY ALEXANDER BARCLAY,

LATELY AND FOR TWENTY-ONE YEARS RESIDENT IN JAMAICA.

"When we have to reason with a practical purpose, concerning existing establishments, the most particular and experimental view of them will ever lead to the soundest and most satisfactory conclusions." MR. STEPHEN.

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY SMITH, ELDER & Co. 65, CORNHILL.

326.972.9
B235P
1
465900

LONDON:
Printed by Littlewood and Co.,
Old Bailey.

PREFACE.

NEVER, perhaps, were mistakes more prevalent upon any subject than they are at present upon that of West India slavery. There are many in this country, and by no means in the lowest stations, who never hear the subject mentioned but they have before their minds chains, dungeons, scourging, maiming, wounding, and death. To their terrified imaginations it appears the land of horrors, where cruelty sits in brief authority, and the oppressed drag out a gloomy life in groans and tears, without any of the comforts of existence, and of course, without manifesting any signs of enjoyment. These false impressions have been mainly owing to a class of authors and orators in the mother country, who, for many years, have been aiming at effect, more than at truth—who have been less anxious to ascertain and make known the

real condition of the negroes, than to give an aggravated and frightful description of it, in order to obtain for themselves the praise and favour which would be most justly due to those who should espouse their cause, if they really were in the situation described.

Embarking, about eighteen months ago, from Jamaica for Britain, after an absence of twenty-one years spent in that island, I chanced to obtain, among other books for entertainment during the voyage, *Mr. Stephen's Slavery of the British West India Colonies.* I had heard of this work, and was well aware that prejudices against the colonists existed in the mother country; but I confess, I had no idea, till I sat down to peruse this celebrated performance, how far those prejudices were carried, and still less that such means or such talents were employed to extend and inflame them. In the picture Mr. Stephen has drawn, I could scarcely recognise a single feature of the community in which I had so long resided; and as I perused his eloquent invective (for such I admit it to be), I could not but feel how little those of my countrymen who had not the same means of knowing the truth, were to be blamed for prejudices which were so artfully and

industriously instilled into them. Impressed with this idea, I employed the leisure which the voyage afforded in taking notes of Mr. Stephen's errors and misrepresentations, and before I reached England, had written out the greater part of what I now submit to the public; but on my arrival in my native land, after so long an absence from my friends, such matters were for some time lost sight of and forgotten; and perhaps I should never have returned to the task, had I not learned that those discussions on the subject (fraught with so much danger to the negroes as well as their masters), were again to be renewed in Parliament,—and at the same time seen Mr. Stephen's work represented in the Edinburgh Review as unanswered, and unanswerable by the colonists, and as affording a most excellent account of the slavery in the British West India islands.

It has not been my lot in the course of an active life, to have enjoyed much time for literary pursuits; and, entering the lists with an acute and eloquent lawyer, I have fearful odds against me: but I derive confidence from my knowledge of the subject, and from the consciousness of having truth on my side, and trust that my work (however little pretension it may have to that eloquence for which Mr. Stephen's

is so much praised) may be useful in making known the actual condition of the slaves, and in exposing the errors, and total want of candour of some of the principal accusers of the colonists.

To the ungraciousness of opposing specious, though visionary, schemes of philanthropy, I am fully sensible; and I never should have undertaken the task, but from a sincere conviction that in doing so, I was advocating the true interests of humanity. The best part of my life has been spent in daily intercouse with the slaves in Jamaica: they are ignorant, it is true; but I have witnessed much goodness among them, and in sickness have often been indebted to their kind attentions. My attachment to them is consequently strong; and in whatever light my conduct may be viewed or represented by those persons in this country to whose sentiments mine are opposed, I can lay my hand on my heart and say, that a conviction of the fatal consequences which would inevitably result to the negroes from the adoption of measures, founded in utter ignorance of their condition, their capabilities, habits, and dispositions, is the *chief* motive which has induced me to appear before the public.

December, 1825.

P. S.—In December 1826, the Assembly of Jamaica passed a consolidated slave law, containing many new and important provisions in favour of the slaves. No person in that island ever imagined that such a law (enacted too in the first instance for only three years, and therefore soon to be re-considered) would not receive the Royal sanction; so much was it approved of by the Duke of Manchester, then governor, that his Grace declared his opinion, that 'the 'mildness and moderation which it evinced, and the 'beneficial alteration produced in the condition of the 'slave in many particulars, would be *highly satisfac-* '*tory* to his Majesty's government.' But it has since appeared, that, whatever the merits of this law, or however beneficial it might have proved to the slaves, it has failed to give satisfaction to those persons in England whose counsels have, of late years, been chiefly, if not exclusively, listened to in the government of our West India colonies.

The new act, then in force, was annexed to the second edition of this work; but, being disallowed by the King in council, it is now deemed unnecessary to swell the volume with so bulky an appendix. Mr. Huskisson's letter, however, stating the objections which led to its disallowance, and the Report of the

Assembly in reply to those objections, are given, as important documents to which frequent reference will undoubtedly be made, as long as the subject continues to engage the attention of the public.

It would be difficult to describe the sensation which the Right Honourable Secretary's letter, announcing the rejection of the law, occasioned in the colony: it was a measure so unexpected, and which appeared so inconsistent with all the recent communications from the Colonial Office. I cannot but apprehend that it has left an impression, if not a conviction, in the minds of the people of that island, of the utter hopelessness of all further attempts on their part to meet the demands of government; since, as the report states, 'when they expected to be honoured with the unreserved commendation of his Majesty, they find 'their labours contemned, and their sacrifices undervalued and rejected.'

February, 1828.

CONTENTS.

Page

Introduction vii

An Examination of Mr. Stephen's Slavery of the British West India Colonies 1

Houses and Gardens of the Negroes, their mode of Life, &c. 303

Plantation Hospitals and Nurseries 311

On the abundance of Fish and Crabs in Jamaica, and Negro methods of catching them 313

On the Decrease of the Slave Population of the Colonies since the Abolition of the Slave Trade 325

Strictures on the Edinburgh Review :—

On the effects of the Negro Emancipation in St. Domingo 335

On the Spirit of West Indian Society 356

Remarks on the Colony Trade 363

Strictures on the Pamphlets of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bickell 392

APPENDIX :

No. I. Papers relating to the disallowed Act of 1826.. 433

II. Resolutions of the Wesleyan Missionaries 472

III. Riot at St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica 478

IV. Extracts from the Code Rural of Hayti..... 480

*** The plan adopted in the examination of Mr. Stephen's work not having admitted of any regular arrangement of the subjects treated of, it has been deemed advisable to give a full Index at the end of the volume.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT there is not room for improvement in the colonies as elsewhere, it would be absurd to suppose; and it is by no means my object to defend either the colonists, or their laws, as perfect. On the contrary, the reader will find, that I have noticed several things which I disapprove of, and have suggested not a few improvements, or what I should deem improvements, on their laws. It does not follow, however, because the system in the colonies is not perfect and may be improved, that it is what Mr. Stephen describes it—'a system uniting in 'itself every species of oppression that has else-'where existed under the sun, and with many ag-'gravations as much beyond example as excuse.' For my own part, I have no hesitation in saying, that if one-twentieth part of his charges against the colonists were true, scarcely could any sacrifice be too great to wipe from the face of the earth so iniquitous, so dreadful an oppression. Fortunately for humanity, his delineation of the slavery in our colonies, is, as I trust I shall be able to shew, as mere a fiction as malice ever forged, or a diseased state of mind, brooding over a creation of its own, ever in dotage mistook for a reality.

It is well known, that the greater part of Mr.

Stephen's work was written so long ago as before the abolition of the African trade in slaves, 'to promote which measure, was its main original object,' as he has himself informed us in his letter to Mr. Smith; and though a greater change has since taken place in the general aspect and condition of the West Indian labourers, than I believe in any other part of the known world, or than perhaps could be paralleled in any age of the world; yet all this improvement is denied by Mr. Stephen, and his reasonings founded on the then state of things are now printed as though they were still applicable, and as if charges which were either without foundation or grossly exaggerated then, were well founded now!

Many of those charges indeed, though they were never before embodied in a systematic form, or stated with so much eloquence, had been long before the public in speeches, reports, pamphlets, &c. and had been again and again refuted. That, however, is not considered any reason why they should not still be brought forward with all the confidence of truth, for 'there is a power,' says Mr. Stephen, 'in reiterated public defamation, of which the innocent 'who have never been the victims of it, are not 'aware. In this land of libels, the purest and best 'known character is not safe. It has been justly 'said on a late public occasion, in a quotation I 'think from Mr. Burke, that by publishing the same 'calumny every day in the year, it may be so effectually forced into circulation and credit, that even 'its own inventor himself may be brought to be-

'lieve it.' *Pref. p.* 53. And if this holds in the case of an individual among his own people, in his native land, how much more must such 'reiterated public 'defamation' prove successful when directed against the distant colonists, in charges, the truth or falsehood of which it is so much more difficult to ascertain or judge of, and concerning which, people will almost necessarily take their opinions from the representations forced into circulation through the press?

Mr. Stephen has his admirers, and he has coadjutors who are as little scrupulous in defaming the planters as himself; but I am far from thinking that all who have taken part with or have been deceived by them, are actuated by bad motives, or are knowingly the abettors of a conspiracy against the colonists. On the contrary, I am well aware that most of them are people of the best intentions, and of such known integrity and benevolence that their motives are liable to no suspicion. But they are ignorant or misinformed as to the real state of matters in the colonies; and being full of generous indignation at the supposed oppression of the negroes, are easily misled by such writers or orators as Mr. Stephen, who affect to plead the cause of religion and humanity, and who thus convert the best feelings of our nature from charity and kindness into engines of oppression against a few unoffending individuals, born among them, their own sons or brothers, entitled to some consideration for carrying the national industry and enterprise into foreign and dangerous

climes, and persecuted only for the sin of the nation in establishing slavery in the colonies some ages before they were born.

In the discussion of measures, which, whether they would benefit the slaves or otherwise, almost necessarily involve the ruin of the colonists, and the annihilation of many millions of British property, although strong language might be excusable on the part of those whose lives and property are endangered, surely it would not be unreasonable to expect some degree of coolness, deliberation and temper (if not even of compassion for the sufferers), on the part of those who are urging the necessity of such measures, who are themselves safe at a distance from the convulsions they may give birth to, and are to have comparatively little or no share in the ruin their schemes of reform in those distant colonies, are likely to bring on their countrymen there. But what is the language in which they treat this grave and most important question? Let the reader judge of this by the extracts from Mr. Stephen's work given in the following sheets, and they are not by any means the most violent passages it contains; or take the following specimen of the cool and dispassionate manner in which it is treated in the Edinburgh Review.

'If you can still rise up and sit down in security—
'if you can still eat the bread of the fatherless, and
'grind the faces of the poor—if you can still hold
'your petty parliaments, and say your little speeches,
'and move your little motions—if you can still out-

'rage and insult the parliament and people of Eng-
'land, to what do you owe it? to nothing but to our
'contemptuous mercy. If we suspend our protec-
'tion—if we recall our troops—in a month the
'knife is at your throats. What are you to us that
'we should pamper and defend you? If the Atlan-
'tic ocean should pass over you, and your place
'know you no more, what should *we* lose?' No. 82.
p. 481.

Such is the mild language of the philanthropy of our day—such the style in which one class of Britons can address their brethren! What Englishman in Jamaica can read this paragraph, and the many such to be found in the writings of the party, without feeling the chords which attached his affections to his native land, violently torn asunder? It was such language, more than the sword of Washington, that lost England her American colonies; and though the West India islands may be less able to resist oppression, the loss of them to the mother country, if this unnatural hostility is continued, will be equally certain, and far more calamitous; for (unless they should chance to pass under the protection of some other power) they will be lost, not to England only, but to the world, at least for many ages, almost as much as if the Atlantic ocean should actually pass over them, and the place of the present inhabitants know them no more.

According to Mr. Stephen, there exists among his countrymen in the West Indies, an universal feeling of hatred and contempt of the negroes, arising from

the personal peculiarities and rudeness of the African race. It is by this assumed hatred and contempt, that he strives to give probability to the most incredible charges of cruelty and oppression; and indeed, in many cases, this alleged feeling of aversion and abhorrence on the part of the whites, is the sole ground for supposing that the charges should be made, and the sole proof of them. Such things must have happened, because the colonists hate the negroes. Now, I most solemnly affirm, not only that I am unconscious of any such surely unnatural feeling having place in my own breast, but that I have never seen any proof of its existence in the breasts of others. I may be in error; but to me it appears, that what Mr. Stephen considers as aggravating the slavery of the British colonies, viz. the superiority of intellect on the part of the masters, mitigates rather than aggravates it, by preventing that jealousy between the slave and his master, which a near approach to equality is apt to produce, as is strikingly exemplified in the case of negro and mulatto masters with their negro and mulatto slaves. Servitude and slavery are surely in many respects the same, and has it ever been alleged that *servitude* is aggravated, or the condition of a servant worse, in proportion to the superiority in education, or of talents and acquirements on the part of the master?*

* We might also ask, if it has been observed, that those who have black servants in this country, 'hate and despise' them? or if they do not treat them as well as their other servants, and take as great an interest in their welfare? But as the anti-colonial party find it convenient to make, 'a wide distinction' between the colo-

If slavery indeed could be justified in any state of man, it surely is where rude and ignorant pagans are advancing to civilization, under the government of an enlightened people, to whom they look up as so greatly their superiors, that subjection to their authority is scarcely felt as a hardship, and certainly not at all as a degradation.

But '*slavery is an evil, and therefore it should be abolished.*' Many a long speech has been delivered in parliament to tell this, and tell nothing more. It is one thing, however, to discover that slavery is an evil, and another to be able to alter a long established system. Who does not admit, for instance, that the English poor-rates are a great evil? but who has been able to suggest how even this evil may be abolished, and the indolent made to maintain themselves? and how much more difficult to abolish slavery, and transform at once, or in a few years, a nation of slaves into a nation of freemen! Than this never did the legislature of any country attempt a task more arduous, or beset with greater difficul-

---

nists when in England, and the same persons when in the colonies (since otherwise the character and behaviour of those West Indians, whom the people have an opportunity of seeing, might make them doubt if they could be such monsters in the colonies), they will probably tell us, that, though a gentleman may be kind to his black servant in England, 'where,' say the Reviewers, 'he participates in English feelings,' in the West Indies, where he retains no English feelings, but 'is degraded by familiarity with oppression,' he would hate and despise him, cart-whip him unmercifully, &c. &c.

I do not mean to assert, that the blacks are no where despised and borne down by the whites; it is notoriously the case, wherever they have the misfortune to intermingle with *white labourers*. But this they have not the misfortune to do in the West Indies, where the labouring class is all black or brown.

ties. It involves a question between the government and the present holders of property, between the proprietors of estates and their dependents now settled on them; it contemplates a change of the mode by which the bulk of the population in the colonies have hitherto been governed—a change in the existing relationships of society—and, to be effectual or beneficial, it must contemplate a change in the very character and habits of the negroes. Yet, with all the difficulties attending it, negro emancipation is a question, the merits of which every body seems to think he is capable of discussing and settling.

To take a view of a few only of these difficulties, let us look at the present situation of matters in the colonies. The proprietors, generally white people, hold extensive domains, upon which their numerous dependents, the negroes, are now domiciled. These are the property of the landlord on whose estate they are settled: but the connection, if it implies that the slave must work for his master, equally implies that the master must protect and provide for his slave. He gives them a proportion of his land to cultivate for their own use—provides them with clothing—attends to them in sickness, and supports them in old age. In return, they labour for him in cultivating that part of the domain retained in his own hands, from the produce of which they, as well as their master, are in a great measure supported. Such is the constitution of society in the colonies. Emancipation at once dissolves the compact, and throws the whole community into utter confusion.

The master is no longer entitled to the labour of his emancipated slave; the slave should therefore no longer be entitled to a house and grounds on the estate of his former master. The emancipatists, however, seem disposed to dissolve the compact on one side only; they are clear that the master should no longer have any right to the services of the slave, but they never contemplate that the emancipated slave should no longer be entitled to the land he held from his master in return for his services. And indeed it is quite clear that the emancipated slaves must continue to occupy their lands; for it would be absurd to suppose that nearly the whole, or even any considerable part of the population of a country, could be turned out of their homes by the landholders; more especially, in this instance, at the moment when the negroes were told that the government, or the king of England, had put an end to the power of the masters over them. The freed negroes, therefore, on the different plantations, would continue to occupy their houses and lands, while the master, having no longer any controul over them, would no longer be able to exact payment in labour for the maintenance they derived from his estate; so that emancipation would deprive him not only of his labourers (whose services he had purchased), but of that part of his land which they now occupy, and in effect of the whole, since his cane fields and expensive manufacturing establishments could no longer be of any value, when he could no longer get labourers to work in them.

Perhaps it will be said, do not the people in this country work, although free? and must not the freed negroes in Jamaica also work, to enable them to live? True, they must cultivate their own grounds, but nothing more. The free labourers in England must work or starve, but there would be no occasion that they should work for others, if they had land rent-free, sufficient for their support. As slaves, the negroes must work—their services are sold for life, but in return they have a provision for life; and if this provision cannot be taken from them when emancipated, which it clearly cannot, they would be placed in a situation quite different from that of the labourers at home. Give these in the same manner the fee-simple of houses and land sufficient to maintain them and their families, and not many of them, more than of the negroes, will hire themselves out as labourers.

But, again, it will be asked, if the negroes when freed continue in the possession of the land and houses they now occupy as slaves, will not the proprietor be entitled, and able, to exact *rent* from them? and must they not work to enable them to pay that rent? The rent they now pay, as already observed, is in labour, which, under the present system, the proprietor can exact: but this power would cease when they were emancipated, unless, like the proprietors at home, he could turn them out of their possessions, which no proprietor would be able to do—as, in their minds, emancipation by the king or government always implies *that they are to have a*

right to their homes; and, beyond all question, the first attempt to remove them would be the signal for revolt. It is a great mistake to suppose that the civil magistrate could accomplish this in Jamaica, and, as in England, enforce the law on such a point; the negroes are as yet in a great measure ignorant of the power or the restraints of the law. The authority of the master has ever been so immediately before their eyes, that they are scarcely sensible of any other restraint. They know that they may be transported by a court for desertion, or hanged for murder, but the power of punishment possessed by the masters, is that by which they have hitherto been chiefly governed. Annul that power, and they will scarcely conceive themselves under any authority; order or government will be at an end; the cultivation of the plantations will cease; and the proprietors, instead of attempting to turn the freed negroes off their estates, must themselves abandon the possession, and seek safety in flight; leaving a disorganized rabble to such new order of things as unforeseen circumstances in the womb of revolution may produce.

Thus the project of emancipating the negroes, if it does not amount to a proscription of the colonists, carries in it an *Agrarian law*, infinitely more ruinous to the proprietors in the West Indies than that which occasioned such tumults and disorders in republican Rome; and the reflections of an eminent writer on that interesting passage of ancient history, are so strikingly applicable to the present question, that

one would almost suppose they had been written for it.*

Nor can it (as some think) in any material degree lessen the danger, that emancipation is not to be immediate, but to commence with the children to be born after a certain date. The moment the principle is announced, and the slaves are told that the King of England has given freedom to their children, that moment their minds are unsettled, labour becomes irksome, and restraint insupportable. They will ask, if their children are to be free, why should not they be free also? If their children are not to work (for such is their understanding of freedom), why

* This act, as it concerned the interest of almost every inhabitant of Italy, immediately raised a great ferment in every part of the country. Persons holding considerable estates in land were alarmed for their property. The poor were elated with the hopes of becoming suddenly rich. If there was a middling class, not to be greatly affected in their own situation, they still trembled for the effects of a contest between such parties. * * * The distinctions of poor and rich are as necessary in states of considerable extent, as labour and good government. The poor are destined to labour, and the rich, by the advantage of education, independence, and leisure; are qualified for superior stations. The rich were not without some violent convulsion to be stript of estates which they themselves had bought, or which they had inherited from their ancestors. The poor were not qualified at once to be raised to a state of equality with persons inured to a better condition. The prospect seemed to be as ruinous to the government as it was to the security of property, and tended to place the members of the commonwealth, by one rash and precipitate step, in situations in which they were not at all qualified to act.

The rich urged, that the public faith under which they were suffered to purchase, was now engaged to protect and secure their possession: that in reliance on this faith they had pledged them for the dowries of their wives and the portions of their children, and mortgaged them as security for the debts they had contracted: that a law regulating or limiting the further increase or accumulation of property might be suffered; but that a law, having a retrospect, and operating to the violation of the rights, and the ruin of so many families, was altogether unjust.

Parties looked on each other with a gloomy and suspicious silence.—*Fergusson's History of the Roman Republic*, Book ii. chap. 2.

should *they* work? The man born in 1827, when he grew up, would naturally ask why *he* should not be free, as well as the man born in 1828 or 1830. And, in fact, it will be a matter of little importance to the proprietors, whether the cultivation of the plantations shall cease at once, or be continued for a few years, amidst strife, suspicions, insurrections, and blood, till the free-born people grow up, when it must of necessity cease, unless the emancipatists can effect something very like a miracle, and change the disposition and habits generated under slavery and barbarism, into such as are formed in Europe in free and civilized states. If they can do this, the sooner it is done the better, both for the slaves and the masters: but, on the other hand, if all they can do, is to set the slaves free from the authority they are now under, without being able to establish any other for their government, they may ruin the planters, but they will not benefit the slaves.

Is it to be inferred, from what has been said, that the slavery in our colonies must be perpetual? Certainly not—but that the evil must be allowed time to work itself out there, as it has done in other countries. If Mr. Stephen is correct in the account he gives of the views of those who carried the abolition of the slave trade, it is to be regretted that the party who now call themselves the ABOLITIONISTS, do not possess the same prudence and good sense. 'They did not aim,' says he, 'at an emancipation to 'be effected by insurrection in the West Indies, or 'to be ordained precipitately by positive law; but

'they never denied, and scrupled not to avow, that 'they did look forward to a future extinction of 'slavery in the colonies, *to be accomplished by the 'same happy means which formerly put an end to it in 'England*, namely, by a benign though insensible 'revolution in opinions and manners, by the encou- 'ragement of particular manumissions and progres- 'sive melioration of the condition of the slaves, till 'it should slide insensibly into general freedom. 'They looked at first to an emancipation, of which 'not the slaves but the masters should be the willing 'instruments. * * * In England, if it should be 'asked, what cause most powerfully contributed to 'the dissolution of the degrading bondage of our 'ancestors, the answer clearly must be—the ex- 'treme favour shewn to individual enfranchisement 'by the judges and laws. That baneful growth of 'foreign conquest, or early barbarism, villeinage, 'had nearly overspread the whole field now covered 'with the most glorious harvest of liberty and social 'happiness earth ever produced, and where not one 'specimen of the noxious weed remains. Yet it 'was not ploughed up by revolution, or mowed 'down by the scythe of legislative abolition, but was 'plucked up, stalk by stalk, by the progressive hand 'of private and voluntary enfranchisement. Slavery 'ceased in England only because the last slave at 'length obtained his manumission, or died without 'a child.'—*Report of the African Institution*, 1815.

Happy will it be for the negroes, if the slavery in the colonies is thus allowed to slide insensibly into

freedom; a glorious harvest of liberty and social happiness will follow. Unfortunately, the publications constantly issuing from the press, and harrowing up the public mind on the subject of slavery, are calculated, and seem intended, to urge on the British public, unaware of the difficulties and danger, to attempt schemes of emancipation 'by the scythe of 'legislative enactment,' which would prove equally fatal to the slaves as to their masters; while it is manifest that, without such interference, slavery would, in due time, become extinct in the colonies, as it did in England, 'by the encouragement of par-'ticular manumissions, and progressive melioration 'of the condition of the slaves.' The first stage of improvement is by far the most difficult to a rude and barbarous people; but the progress which the negroes have already made is far from inconsiderable. No person who saw the situation of the slaves in Jamaica twenty years ago, would have believed it possible that so great a change for the better could have taken place in so short a period; and no one who sees the progress they are now making, can, in reason, wish more than that they should continue to go on at the same pace. The improvement in their manners, dress, and general appearance—the greater intelligence they display from understanding the language better—the greater comforts they enjoy from improved habits of industry, and the advance they have made in religion (I speak more particularly of the eastern part of the island, where I resided), are in the highest degree satisfactory and encouraging.

But as some persons at home take upon them to deny that there has been any improvement in the colonies, it may not be improper to enumerate here (for the sake of those who may not have patience to read through a controversial work) a few of the changes in the condition of the negroes, and of the meliorations on the slave laws.

At no very distant period, when savage Africans were pouring into Jamaica, and while there were yet but few natives or Creoles, the master's power of punishing his slaves was little restrained by law; and was exercised to a great extent by the subordinate white people and the drivers.	It is now limited to 39 stripes, to be inflicted by order and in presence of the master or overseer, and 10 by subordinate agents: and, comparatively speaking, is but seldom required at all. There is not now one punishment for twenty that were inflicted fifteen or twenty years ago.
Ten years ago chains were in common use on the plantations, for punishing criminal slaves.	The use of them is now entirely abolished.
Twenty years ago, there was scarcely a negro baptised in Jamaica.	Now they are nearly all baptized.
Twenty years ago, the churches were scarcely at all attended by the slaves.	Since then, the number of churches or places of worship of one kind or other, has been more than doubled, in fact nearly trebled, and yet, in the districts where I have had an opportunity of seeing them, they are all fully attended, and principally by slaves.
Twenty years ago, negroes were buried at midnight, and the funeral rites, in the forms of	Negroes are now buried during the day, and in the same manner as the white people.

African superstition, were the occasion of continual excesses among those who attended.

Ten years ago, the marriage rite was altogether unknown among the slaves.

The number now married is not inconsiderable, and is fast increasing.

While the importation of Africans was continued, the practice of Obeah was common and destructive.

It is now seldom heard of.

The working of sugar mills encroached on Sunday during crop.

It is now prohibited by law, and Sunday is strictly a day of rest.

Formerly the Negroes cultivated their grounds on Sunday —white persons were even sent to superintend them.

Now they have by law 26 working days in the year for this purpose: every manager must swear that he has given them this number of days; and no slaves now work at their grounds on Sunday, but such as are more inclined to make money than to attend church. A law to forbid their working at all would be of doubtful policy, till they learn to employ the day better than in idling and drinking.

When the abolition of the African trade took place, a large proportion of the slaves were newly imported Africans, maintained with provisions raised or brought by the master; or lodged with other slaves, who had grounds which they assisted in cultivating.

Now the plantation slaves in Jamaica have all houses of their own, and grounds of their own, and are in every respect more comfortable and independent. They form more steady connections, pay more attention to their families in the way of keeping them clean, and dressing them neatly; and, in short, have ac-

Manumissions were at one time burthened with heavy taxes.

For cruel or improper punishments, slaves had formerly no adequate redress.

Formerly the trial of slaves was, I believe, by parol; and the power of death was entrusted to the slave courts, who could order the criminal to immediate execution.

For ten slaves that were executed twenty years ago,

Twenty years ago the coasting vessels of Jamaica were almost exclusively manned with slaves.

The operative mechanics about towns, carpenters, ship-builders, &c. were mostly slaves.

A few years ago, marriage was unknown among the free people of colour.

The number of free persons in Jamaica, in 1787, was estimated at only 10,000.

quired more taste and desire for domestic enjoyments.

They are now perfectly free.

Now they are manumised and provided with an annuity for life; and magistrates are appointed a council of protection, to attend to their complaints.

Now the whole evidence and conviction must be transmitted to the governor: and, unless in cases of rebellion, the sentence cannot be carried into execution without his warrant.

There is not now more than one, and I think not even that proportion.

From the increase of the free population, the coasting vessels are now more commonly manned with free men.

This description of work is now performed principally by free people of colour.

It is now becoming common, and many of them are careful to preserve the sanctity of the institution.

It is now 35,000, and rapidly encreasing by manumissions as well as births.

These few particulars will convey but a very inadequate idea of the progress made by the negroes, and how superior a people they are in every respect to what they were, when the slave trade was abo-

lished in 1807. But if, as Mr. Stephen observes, '*every mitigation of slavery is a step towards freedom,*' this brief statement may be sufficient to shew, that progress is making towards it; and those who have patience to peruse the following sheets, will better comprehend what the extent of that progress is, and what the actual condition of the labourers in the colonies.

A PRACTICAL VIEW

OF THE

PRESENT STATE OF SLAVERY

IN

THE WEST INDIES,

&c. &c.

On Mr. Stephen's "Slavery in the British West Indid Colonies."

'PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.—Of the necessity and importance of describing the state in question.' p. 1.

IN the task I have undertaken, it is not my object to defend slavery: far be it from me to say, that those who established it in our colonies did right, or that being established there, it ought to be perpetual. But the question, when or how slavery may be abolished in any particular country or colony where it exists, is one of no small difficulty, however easy it may seem to many benevolent enthusiasts; and before making an attempt which might produce effects very different from those we intended, it would at least be proper to enquire, first, whether

those we would set free, are yet capable of conducting themselves as freemen, or of preserving their freedom,—in short, whether, all circumstances considered, they would be benefited by it;—and secondly, whether we can effect their freedom with a due regard to justice, which would be equally violated by our depriving a man of his slaves, as by depriving him of any other species of property which the laws of the land have sanctioned the acquirement of. Mr. Stephen himself, though so hostile to the slavery in our colonies, that he seems to think *it* ought to be abolished at any sacrifice of life and property to the colonists, and even, it would seem, at the expense of *some* indemnity, to be made them by the mother country, is yet sufficiently moderate on the abstract question. *

'The ardent lovers of freedom,' says he, 'will, I hope, pardon me. To no British palate has that rich produce of our soil a higher flavor than to my own. *But yet I am not prepared to say, that in no other country, and under no supposable circumstances, ought one man to be bound to serve another for life; and to be liable to corporal punishment by the master, for withholding that service.* Let me not be misunderstood, however, as holding the affirmative. I simply mean to decline the discussion of the question, as perhaps, of considerable difficulty; but if not, at least, as one of a speculative kind, which nothing in the arguments I mean to offer, will oblige me to decide.' p. 7.

Such are Mr. Stephen's ideas on this subject, on

* Let parliament enter on the work, says he, and the advocates of the slaves will object to none of the necessary means. I do not except indemnity to their masters, *as far as it is justly due.* Pref. p. 42.

But as he afterwards labours to invalidate, or at least, to create doubts about the right of the colonists to their slaves, it is very questionable if he thinks any indemnity "*justly due.*"

which I forbear to enlarge, as my business is not to defend slavery, or to discuss the abstract question, but to correct errors and misrepresentations regarding the treatment and present condition of the slaves in Jamaica, which I am enabled to do from a personal and intimate knowledge of their state acquired during a long residence in the island.

The best evidence regarding the colonies.

Mr. S. pretends to advance nothing against the colonists but on the very best evidence. 'I shall 'not,' says he, 'assume the truth of any state-'ment adverse to the colonial system, that has ever 'been controverted, however unimpeachable the 'testimony may be on which it stands, until 'I have shewn it to have been directly or indirectly 'confirmed by the concessions of the colonists 'themselves, by the witnesses produced on their 'part, or the answers solemnly given by the 'West India legislatures, and their public agents, 'to the Privy Council.' pp. 10, 11. But those who have patience to peruse these sheets, will know what account to make of these professions of candour and regard to truth. He even seems to admit that he has given no credit to the evidence adduced by the colonists, *but where he could make it read against them.* 'What faith,' says he, 'was due to 'such testimony when it *went to contradict* the 'charges of abolitionists, or the testimony adduced 'by them, I shall not here stop to enquire — its 'authority *on that side* will be better estimated

'when we have seen a little of its particular style 'and character,' p. 10. Let the impartial reader judge what chance there is of coming at the truth in this way, by selecting, like a special pleader, from a mass of evidence, such parts only as may be made to read against the accused party, and giving implicit faith to these; while none is given to those parts which contradict the charges;—thus making the credibility of the evidence to depend on its telling *against* the accused.

The colonists, it is true, are accused of prejudices, and supposed to receive a bias from self-interest; but if the whole body of planters (and the supposition is not very liberal) were without exception to be regarded as so blinded by prejudice, or so void of truth, that their testimony could not be received, is there no alternative for the impartial British public but to listen to their enemies, those party philanthropists who are all benevolence to one part of their fellow-creatures, and all hatred to another? Are there not well-educated men, officers in the service of government, civil, naval, and military, almost every day returning from the colonies? Many of these, doubtless, went out from the mother country with strong prejudices; but have they, on their return, told this tale of horror? Have *they* said that the slaves are ill-treated, oppressed, or unhappy? Have they not borne testimony to the contrary? And is there any thing so very captivating in the system and management

described by Mr. Stephen, that even a person who has no interest could not see it (were it to be seen) without being enamoured of it, adopting the prejudices of the colonists, and becoming a convert to their cause against truth and justice? The poet tells us that

> Vice is a monster of such frightful mein,
> As to be hated, needs but to be seen—

and if the slavery in our colonies bore any degree of resemblance to the picture Mr. S. has drawn of it, could it be seen by such men without horror?

Again, there are seven or eight hundred sail of vessels employed in bringing home the produce of those possessions, the masters of which are well acquainted with the plantations in the vicinity of the ports where the vessels are loaded; have they seen the poor blacks overworked, stinted of food, unmercifully whipped, or otherwise ill-treated? Moreover, almost every family in the kingdom has some relation or acquaintance who has resided in, or visited the colonies, and can speak to the condition and treatment of the slaves; and are these relations or acquaintances less worthy of credit than those writers or orators who have not crossed the Atlantic to obtain for themselves a knowledge of slavery, as it now exists in the colonies, and yet (with the advantage of appearing to have justice and humanity on their side) have been able, by unsupported charges and vague declamation, to raise such a flame in the kingdom?

Let such authorities be consulted by those who would form a correct judgment on this matter, and who admit, that 'when we have to reason with a 'practical purpose concerning existing establish-'ments, the most particular and experimental view 'of them will ever lead to the soundest and most 'satisfactory conclusions.'

Feelings of the colonists towards the slaves.

Even in his preliminary chapter, Mr. Stephen betrays the hostile feeling with which he is actuated towards the English colonists. Speaking of Onesimus, a slave who was sent back by St. Paul to his master, a Christian convert, without any injunction to alter his state, he remarks, that the state of slavery (that among the Greeks) to which Onesimus was sent back, was very different indeed from that of a negro slave in the West Indies; and in a note, very characteristic of the spirit of his work, he adds —

'A West Indian will readily perceive, by his own feelings, one important distinction, indicatory of others, still more important: *Receive him as a brother beloved.* How destructive of the Apostle's benevolent design, how inconsistent with the rest of his conciliatory style, would have been this phrase, if Onesimus had, like a negro slave, been, from his very cast and condition, independently of his fault, an object of *aversion and contempt*, with his master! A *vile* negro, *a brother!* Foh! the humiliating idea would have been offensive, even in a religious metaphor, and from the pen of an apostle!' p. 6.

A West Indian does not, and cannot perceive by his own feelings, the existence of any such aversion to, or contempt for his labourers; nor can it ente

into his imagination to conceive, on what principle it could even be supposed, that he should entertain such monstrous and unnatural feelings towards a people on whose labour and welfare his every prospect in life depends. Negroes themselves would smile at such an absurdity. So well aware are they of the existence of a contrary feeling on the part of their masters, that when treated, as they conceive, rather harshly by a person in charge of them, and who owns no slave himself, it is a common expression with them, '*He does not feel for a negro, he has got none himself.*' This short but significant expression conveys a very different impression of the disposition of the masters from that which Mr. S. ascribes to them in almost every page of his book. Which of the two bears most the stamp of truth, let common sense, and common feeling decide. Nor is it only among the masters, who are most interested in the labour and welfare of the slaves, that a friendly disposition towards them is to be found; but generally also among the managers of plantations. In fact they could have no comfort in their situations, if they acted otherwise. Negroes are not deficient in intelligence; they are perfectly aware what is due to them; and if any improper severity on the part of the manager gives them cause of complaint, they are not slow in making their grievances known, either to the master, or, in his absence, to his representative the attorney, upon whom the overseer is dependent for his situa-

tion, or to the magistrates, who are ever ready to attend to their complaints.

In opposition to that unnatural hatred of their slaves, and contempt for them, with which the white people in the colonies are charged by Mr. Stephen, one might instance, not merely the exertion of the masters' power for the protection of their people from every species of injury (in which there is little merit, though they have not credit with Mr. S. even for *this*); but the readiness of both masters and managers to do them such good offices, as flow entirely from kindness and good will. And among many little circumstances, which might be mentioned to shew the kind of feeling that exists between the two classes, perhaps there is none that will convey a better idea of it to a stranger, than the simple fact, how customary it is for a negro on a plantation, when he has committed a fault for which he apprehends punishment, to go to some neighbouring overseer, whom he knows to be on good terms with his own overseer, and solicit his mediation for forgiveness. If the fault has been trivial such as a few days' absence from duty, the culprit may perhaps be satisfied with a note interceding for him; if more serious, such as neglecting the cattle, and allowing them to destroy a valuable field of canes, or being a long time absent, he insists on the person going home with him; and in cases of this kind, I have often known gentlemen, in the heat of the day, and in indifferent

health, ride several miles to save a poor fellow from a flogging.

I never knew such mediation solicited that was not granted; usually, with a very proper admonition to behave better in future; nor did I ever know such intercession made, and not successful, but in one solitary instance, which, from its rarity, was a topic of conversation in the neighbourhood. I have often myself been applied to, to be the intercessor for forgiveness on such occasions, and have left my business (as who would not?) to attend to the call.

When negroes are christened, it is a common custom with them to take the name of some white person for whom they have a regard, and whom they request to stand sponsor for them. This forms a lasting claim to some attention; the sponsor is in future addressed Godfather; and a friendly connexion is cultivated with him by occasional presents of poultry, fruit, &c. always accompanied with a profusion of kind wishes. Of course the presents must be fully repaid; but still there is something gratifying in such spontaneous marks of kindness and good will, to which no person can feel indifferent.

Do these minute facts (and they are too minute to be worth notice, but as they throw some light on the condition of the negroes) bespeak the existence of that horrid feeling of aversion and contempt for them, which Mr. Stephen describes as rankling in the bosom of the English colonists? Or do they

warrant that sneer of scorn imputed to them in the elegant phrase, '*a vile* negro, *a brother!* Foh!'

Amusements of the slaves.

Even the very amusements of the slaves may be referred to, to shew the feeling that exists between them and the white people to be very different. The day on which the last of the canes are cut down upon a sugar plantation, flags are displayed in the field, and all is merriment. A quart of sugar, and a quart of rum, are allowed to each negro on the occasion, to hold what is called CROP-OVER, or harvest home. In the evening they assemble in their master's or manager's house, and as a matter of course, take possession of the largest room, bringing with them a fiddle and tambourine. Here all authority and all distinction of colour ceases; black and white, overseer and book-keeper, mingle together in the dance. About twenty years ago, it was common on occasions of this kind, to see the different African tribes forming each a distinct party, singing and dancing to the *gumbay*, after the rude manners of their native Africa; but this custom is now extinct. The fiddle is now the leading instrument with them, as with the white people, whom they imitate; they dance Scotch reels, and some of the better sort (who have been house servants) country-dances. Here the loud laugh, and the constant buzz of singing and talking, bespeak their enjoyment, and the absence of all care about the present or future ills of life.

Such dances were formerly common, or I should rather say universal, at Christmas; but of late years

have much gone out, owing to an idea impressed on the minds of the negroes, principally I believe by the missionaries, that the season ought rather to be devoted to religious exercises. It is now considered more becoming to attend the places of worship, or to have private religious parties among themselves; and in passing through a negro village on a Christmas night, it is more common to hear psalm-singing, than the sound of merriment. The young people, however, still indulge in some amusements on this occasion, one of which may be worth describing. The young girls of a plantation, or occasionally of two neighbouring plantations leagued, form what is called 'a sett.' They dress exactly in uniform, with gowns of some neat pattern of printed cotton, and take the name of Blue Girls, Yellow Girls, &c. according to the dress and ribbon they have chosen. They have always with them in their excursions, a fiddle, a drum, and a tambourine, frequently boys playing fifes, a distinguishing flag which is waved on a pole, and generally some fantastical figure, or toy, such as a castle or tower, surrounded with mirrors. A matron attends who possesses some degree of authority, and is called Queen of the Sett, and they have always one or two Joncanoe-men, smart youths, fantastically dressed, and masked so as not to be known. Thus equipped, and generally accompanied by some friends, they proceed to the neighbouring plantation villages, and always visit the master's or manager's house, into which they enter without ceremony, and where they are joined by the white

people in a dance. Some refreshment is given to them, and the Joncanoe-men, after a display of their buffoonery, commonly put the white people under requisition for a little money, to pay the fiddler, &c. A party of forty or fifty young girls thus attired, with their hair braided over their brows, beads round their necks, and gold ear-rings, present a very interesting and amusing sight, as they approach a house dancing, with their music playing, and Joncanoe-men capering and playing tricks. They have generally fine voices, and dancing in a room they require no instrumental music.* One of their best singers commences the song, and unaccompanied sings the first part with words for the occasion, of course not always very poetical, though frequently not unamusing; the whole sett joins in the chorus as they mingle in the dance, waving their handkerchiefs over their heads. All is life and joy, and certainly it is one of the most pleasing sights that can be imagined.

The last party of this kind which I had the pleasure of seeing and dancing with, at Christmas 1823, belonged to Reach and Muirton estates, the property of Mr. William Bryan, and afforded a novelty I had never before witnessed, in a rude representation of

* The airs they sing and dance to are simple and lively; the following is a specimen:—

some passages of Richard III. which they made sufficiently farcical. The Joncanoe-men, disrobed of part of their paraphernalia, were the two heroes, and fought, not for a kingdom but a queen, whom the victor carried off in triumph. Richard calling out "A horse! a horse!" &c. was laughable enough. This farce I saw at Dalvey estate, the property of Sir A. Grant, and it afforded Mr. Bell the manager and his guests no small amusement. How the negroes had acquired even the very imperfect knowledge they seemed to have of the play, we could form no idea, and the occasion did not admit of asking questions.*

While on the subject of Christmas I may observe, that the whole of the Negroes in Jamaica, have three, and some of them four days allowed for their amusements; and that on this occasion their masters give them an allowance of rum, sugar, and codfish or salt meat; and, generally, the larger estates kill as many cattle as are sufficient to give each family a few pounds of fresh beef. Nor let it be supposed that this is the amount of their enjoyments; the more wealthy slave families kill pigs and poultry, have their Christmas cakes, and in fact abound in good things both to eat and to drink.

To many who contemplate the West India labourers but as 'wretches born to work and weep;' who have them associated in their minds with hor-

* Since this was written, I have read Mr. De la Beche's pamphlet, who mentions having seen the same thing in a different part of the island.

rors, cruel oppression, and broken-heartedness, the description I have given of a *sett*, may appear a picture altogether imaginary: but let such persons ask any one, who has been upon a Jamaica plantation at a Christmas season, if the description is not correct.

Origin of the slavery in the colonies, and right of the colonists to compensation.

'CHAPTER I.—On the Origin and Authority of the Colonial Slave Laws in general.' p. 14.

Under this head the following paragraph deserves notice.

'The assemblies have often, in their acts, recognised slavery as an existing institution; and have, by directing or regulating the sale of slaves, and by numerous other provisions, treated them as subjects of property. But if the books of colonial acts were resorted to for information as to the legal origin of this state, the rights which it gives to the masters, or the duties and incapacities which it imposes upon the slaves, no satisfaction upon these important heads would be found.' p. 14.

It may be true that slavery had not in the West Indies, or in any other country perhaps, its *origin* in any positive enactment; but Mr. Stephen himself informs us of its "legal origin" in our colonies. 'The bringing labourers or negroes from Africa,' says he, 'was certainly *permitted, and even encouraged* '*by parliament;* and in the more modern acts there 'was no reserve in respect to the condition of these 'exiles, as far as a vague name could define it; for 'the commerce in *slaves, eo nomine,* has been ex-'pressly recognised and regulated.' p. 14.

And yet in every page of his book, our author

pours out his abuse on the colonists, as if slavery had been an evil of *their* creating, and for the infamy of which they now merit the vengeance of heaven and of earth! Without stopping to enquire whether or not the condition of savages has been improved by the change, one thing is certain, that the merit or odium of it is due, not to the inhabitants of the colonies, but to the people of England. They reaped the advantages of establishing slavery in the West Indies; it was *their* ships and *their* capital that conveyed the negroes from their native land to these fertile islands, from the cultivation of which, the British people have derived so much of the wealth they possess*; and if any of the existing interests are now to be broken up, these surely ought, in common justice, to be indemnified at the public expence. Mr. S. thinks otherwise; and after stating as above, that in the acts of parliament encouraging the trade in slaves, there was no reserve, and that the commerce in *slaves, eo nomine,* was expressly recognised and regulated,—to do away any impression that this should found a right to compensation on the part of the colonists, if deprived of their property, obtained under such a sanction, he proceeds to say, 'But

* The West India colonies are of great importance in extending the manufactures and commerce of the mother country. It is difficult to find any engine more efficient for the purpose. Possessing them has occasioned a pouring in of wealth into this country, much of which was employed in fertilizing the soil. The wealth received from the Dutch and other islands was in fact visible on whole districts of the country, not only from the money expended, but in the very names of the spots brought into cultivation.—Speech, House of Commons, Mr. Brougham, April 9, 1816.

'that these *foreigners* shall on their arrival in a Bri-
'tish colony, where British law and liberty are esta-
'blished, be *sold into*, and perpetually retained in
'slavery, and that the same state shall attach on
'their offspring,' (as it did on that of the *villeins* in England), 'though born under the king's allegiance, 'has never been enacted.'—'Parliament seems all 'along to have supposed that there was some known 'local law in the colonies, distinct from the law of 'England, which had *introduced* and defined the 'state in question.' p. 15.

Was ever sophistry more glaring? Parliament sanctioned and encouraged the trade in African SLAVES, *eo nomine*, but, it seems, did not enact that those slaves, or *foreigners* (as Mr. S. artfully calls them) were to be held as slaves in our colonies! For what *other* purpose they were bought and carried there, he has not attempted to explain. Again, parliament, it seems, has all along foolishly supposed that some local law in the colonies, of which it was ignorant, had introduced the state in question: although it must have known that the state existed there, and had been recognized by its own acts encouraging the trade in slaves, before the colonial legislatures had existence!

Mr. Barham on compensation.

But Mr. Barham has stated this matter so clearly, that it is only necessary to give his statement, as, until the facts he brings forward are set aside, the legal title of the colonists to their property, and their right to compensation if it is taken from them,

cannot be questioned but by those persons who are prepared to advocate not merely oppression, but absolute spoliation.

'To say that Great Britain formed the plan, and that the colonies executed it — to say that Great Britain made the laws, and that the colonies availed themselves of those laws, — would be greatly understating the share which Great Britain had in the origin of the slave trade, and in the consequent system of slavery that now exists. But many persons have been so used to charge all the odium of that system on those who, by accident, happen to be the present owners of slaves, that they will be surprised to learn how much larger a share Great Britain has had than the colonies, in the formation, maintenance, and present extent of slavery.

'The following historical facts will clear up this point a little.

'Great Britain established the slave trade in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who personally took a share in it.	'The colonies did not then exist.
'Great Britain encouraged it in the successive reigns of Charles I, Charles II, and James II, by every means that could be devised. But it was William III. who outdid them all. With Lord Somers for his minister, he declared the slave trade to be "highly beneficial to the nation:" and that this was not meant merely as beneficial to the nation through the medium of the colonial prosperity is demonstrated by the Assiento Treaty in 1713,	'The colonies, all this time, took no share in it themselves, merely purchasing what the British merchants brought them, and doing therein what the British government invited them to do, by every means in their power.

with which the colonies had nothing to do; and in which Great Britain binds herself to supply 144,000 slaves, at the rate of 4,800 per annum, to the Spanish colonies. From that time till within a few years of the present time, our history is full of the various measures and grants, which passed for the encouragement and protection of the trade.

'So much as to those who created and fostered the trade; and now let us see, who it was that first marked it with disapprobation, and sought to confine it within narrower bounds.

'The colonies began in 1760. South Carolina (then a British colony) passed an act to prohibit further importation; but

'Great Britain rejected this act with indignation, and declared that the slave trade was beneficial and necessary to the mother country. The governor, who passed it, was reprimanded; and a circular was sent to all other governors, warning them against a similar offence.

'The colonies, however, in 1765, repeated the offence, and a bill was twice read in the assembly of Jamaica, for the same purpose of limiting the importation of slaves; when

'Great Britain stopped it, through the governor of that island, who sent for the assembly, and told them, that consistently with his instructions, he could not give his assent; *upon which the bill was dropped.*

'The colonies, in 1774, tried once more; and the assembly of

'Great Britain again resisted the restriction. Bristol and Li-

Jamaica actually passed two bills to restrict the trade; but

verpool petitioned against it. The matter was referred to the Board of Trade, and that Board reported against it.

'The colonies, by the agent of Jamaica, remonstrated against that report, and pleaded against it on all the grounds of justice and humanity; but

'Great Britain, by the mouth of the Earl of Dartmouth, then president of the Board, answered by the following declaration:— "We cannot allow the colonies to check or discourage, in any degree, a traffic so beneficial to the nation." And this was in 1774!

'It is presumed, after this, not many persons will be disposed to contend, that Great Britain has not had, at least, an equal share in establishing slavery with those who happen now to be the actual owners of slaves.

'But still there are some points to be closely examined before we shall venture to pronounce, that the claim for compensation rests on the strictest grounds of justice.

'To make that claim *absolute* it must be shown, that the thing which is required to be surrendered is not merely a *system* which afforded the means of prospective gain, but that it is absolutely *a property in possession*, and held by the same right by which all other property is held — *the law*. Closer than this it does not seem possible to draw the line; and here lies the distinction, between the present claim, and that which was made at the time the slave trade was abolished.

'The claim then made (but which was urged much more strenuously by the British slave-merchant than the planter) was not a claim for *property in possession*. The slave trade could not be property, though it might be the means of creating property. The right to trade had been permitted by law, but no engagement had been made, that it should be permitted for ever. Those, who trusted in its continuance, trusted at their own risk, and when it was prohi-

bited, what they lost was not a vested property, but the chance of contingent gain; whereas, what will be taken here, is that which the law has sanctioned as property for ever.

'A very respectable author (Mr. Clarkson) contends against this claim of property, upon a ground which it is not necessary here to dispute. His argument seems to be, that such property cannot be created even by law, since it is contrary to the first principles of our nature (which are anterior and superior to all law), that one man should have property in another man. Be it so, but what then? This would justify the slave in regaining his liberty by any means he could employ, since he had been unjustly deprived of it. But in the question of compensation, the slave is no party. That question lies wholly between the proprietor and the Legislature, which has constituted the property. *The law must be binding, at least on those that made it.* If the Legislature, with a view to national advantage has committed injustice, and now, with a view to national justice, would repair the wrong, it is for the nation to pay the price of its wrong, and not for the individual who acted in conformity to the law. To fix on the present proprietor the cost of redeeming the acts of the nation at large, would be concluding a series of injustice to Africa by an act of injustice to a portion of your own subjects, with regard to whom your first laws would have been a fraud, and your last would be a robbery.'

Slavery, how aggravated in the English colonies.

'CHAPTER II.—On the persons who are subject to slavery in our colonies.' p. 27.

Who these are, might have been told in few words: the negroes whom English merchants, trading under the sanction of the British parliament, carried from Africa and sold in the colonies as slaves, and the descendants of such slaves.

By the following extracts we learn, that the condition of the African slave in our colonies is much aggravated, beyond every other description of

slavery, not only by the white skin, but strange to say, by the elevated and superior intellect of his master: and moreover, that negroes and mulattoes make better masters than educated white people!

'The negro is not more opposite to his *white-skinned lord* in complexion, than in manners, and intellectual attainments; the one is degraded by all the ignorance and rudeness of his native Africa; the other elevated by the refinements in arts and manners at least, if not also by the science, of Europe,' p. 28. 'It would, perhaps, be too much refinement, if we were to suppose that the great comparative *mildness* of the Portuguese and Spanish slavery may have been in some degree influenced by a *nearer approximation in colour* between the masters and the slaves than is found in the Dutch and English colonies, where the state is confessedly the worst.' p. 32.

Are Englishmen, or free negroes and Mulattoes, the best slave-masters?

'If it be asked then, why are free negroes and mulattoes said to be the worst masters? I answer, only because every thing *is said* whether true or false, by the oppressors of the African race, that may serve to diminish our sympathy with those whom they oppress. The statement is untrue; nay, it is the reverse of truth.' p. 32.

Therefore negroes and mulattoes must be the best masters to negro and mulatto slaves!

It is almost unnecessary to observe how much this assertion is 'the reverseof truth;' no person, who has the least knowledge of the West Indies, can be ignorant that negroes and mulattoes make the very worst masters, or at all events that the slaves, who ought to be the best judges, think so. I have frequently known free persons of colour, and also slaves, very anxious to purchase slaves, but unable to do it, from the universal abhorrence negroes have to belong to such masters; for, not-

withstanding the misrepresentations made to the contrary, it is very seldom that a slave is transferred from one person to another, but with his own free consent and approbation. It would be painful for the seller to act otherwise when parting with his people; and extremely hazardous to the purchaser. What then comes of the theory that the Portuguese and Spaniards make better masters than the English and Dutch in consequence of having *darker complexions*? For, in this case, free negroes and mulattoes would make the best of all masters; whereas, in truth, they make the worst.

But this assertion, like others, will answer Mr. Stephen's purpose, if the British public will only believe, that West India Slavery is the worst that ever existed in the world; that English slavery there, is yet more cruel than that of any other country; and that the better educated and more enlightened the master, the worse it is for the slave. The negroes argue in a different way. They dislike to belong to free persons of colour, or even to low ignorant whites, because, as they briefly but pithily express it, '*they are too spiteful.*' If a white person punishes them for a fault, they say, there is no more of it; but if they once give offence to a mulatto master, '*he spites them like a negro,*' that is, follows up the punishment with resentment. Nor is this difficult to explain, on at least a rather more rational principle than that of the approximation of colour. Between the negro and his colour-

ed master or mistress, there is often little difference of intellect; the negro in consequence feels less respect for such a person, while the master is more tenacious of those attentions to which he thinks himself entitled from his slave. Hence arises a jealousy which renders them mutually uncomfortable. This is not theory, but experience, however much at variance with Mr. Stephen's doctrine, that the state of the slave is aggravated by his master's possessing the elevated and liberal sentiments resulting from education.

'Amidst all the reviling epithets,' says Mr. Stephen, 'used in anger towards these poor bondmen, '*You slave!* or any allusion to the condition, is 'never heard; but *Negro!* pronounced with an angry 'or contemptuous emphasis, is a word of superla-'tive reproach.' p. 31. And this is intended to shew that the bodily designation is more degrading than slavery! Here is refinement with a vengeance! A negro considers himself no more reproached by a white man calling him *Negro,* than a white man does by a negro calling him *Buckra,* their common term for a white man. The word 'slave,' it is true, is never heard; if it were, we should, perhaps, with more reason have been accused of adding insult to injury. Who in England says *You servant?* and as little is *You slave* heard in Jamaica.

This nice disquisition brings to my recollection having once, (when a book-keeper on Holland estate) inadvertently addressed one of the negro boiler-

men, 'You sir!' for which he gave me such a pointed and merited rebuke, as I have never forgotten. He asked, repeating my words with much indignation, '*You sir!* who do you call *You sir;* have I not a name?'

General remarks.

'CHAPTER III.—On the legal nature and incidents of this condition, as they respect and constitute the relation between the slave and his master.' p. 33.

This chapter comprehends such a mass of heterogeneous legal matter, as seems to stamp it the commencement of what the author, according to his letter to Mr. Smith, had written and printed while the abolition question was under discussion; and which he now publishes as a delineation of the *existing state* of slavery in the British West India Colonies! To him and his party, this course of proceeding will appear quite right; as, according to them, the state existing now, is the very same that existed twenty-five years ago, and is likely to be the same as many years hence! If the colonists are without legal enactments to secure the proper treatment of the slaves, they are imprecated for leaving their poor bondmen without protection;—if they have laws which appear to be severe, these, we are assured, are strictly enforced;—but if they pass meliorating laws, these are incapable of being enforced; were intended merely to deceive the humane at home; and are, in practice, a dead letter —'made, laughed at, and forgotten.' Well may

we ask, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'

To defend ourselves from such calumnies, to be compelled to refute charges, which, in charity to human nature, one would suppose beyond belief, is sufficiently painful and humiliating, and requires a degree of patience which a sense of duty alone can inspire. But absurd as it is, to publish *now*, as the existing state of slavery in the colonies, what was written as descriptive of it (whether truly or otherwise) *prior to the abolition*; and equally extravagant as it is in the British public to believe that members of its own family, crossing the Atlantic, between whom and themselves there exists so constant a communication and interchange of sentiments, should become such merciless tyrants — so dead to every proper feeling of humanity and justice; yet, it is a melancholy truth that they have believed it, and that the infatuation has reached a height which threatens to overwhelm in one general calamity the colonists and the very slaves themselves, whose condition it is the object of the benevolent to improve.

It would be tedious and useless to follow Mr. Stephen through all his unwarranted assertions and sophistry, in a chapter consisting of 100 pages; but nothing that bears fairly on the subject shall be passed over. He has found out, it seems, that there are twelve canons or rules applicable to this slavery, and which are now, for the first

time, promulgated to the world. Of these in their order.

Slavery a constrained servitude.

'RULE I.—By the law of the colonies, slavery is a constrained servitude during the life of the slave.' p. 33.

Mr. Stephen himself admits, 'that this is a property of the state almost universally belonging to 'it, and comprised in the most general ideas we 'form of slavery.' The same we suppose will be admitted as to the issue of slaves being held the property of the person to whom the parents belonged, wherever the state of slavery has existed.

Regulations as to food, clothing, time of labour, &c.

'RULE II.—It is a service without wages.' p. 33.

What are the wages which the labourer even in Great Britain receives for his services? The bare means of procuring the necessaries of life, food and raiment, for himself and his family. Of wealth and physical comforts assuredly less falls to his share, than to the plantation labourers of the colonies. The anti-colonists, when advocating emancipation by another view of the subject, represent, and truly, slave labour as more expensive than free. This is not very consistent with Mr. Stephen's CANON; but it did not suit his present view of slavery to have it believed, that the slaves are remunerated for their labour by at least as many comforts as the working classes in his own country. 'A man,' says Hume, 'is obliged to clothe and feed his slave, and he does 'no more for his servant.'

'RULE III.—The master is the sole arbiter of the kind, and degree, and time of labour, to which the slave shall be subjected; and of the subsistence, or means of obtaining a subsistence, which shall be given in return.' p. 33.

Mr. Stephen makes a very feeble attempt to support this assertion by referring to old obsolete laws, and evidence founded thereon; but seems to feel that he has not facts to bear him out, and concludes thus:—

'It would be tedious to multiply further these citations. In general, it will be found that in none of the islands, *prior to* 1788, had any legal limitations, real or ostensible, been imposed on the power of the master in these important points. If not restrained by his own conscience or prudence, he might exact labour to any excess, and adopt any scale or manner of sustentation for his slaves, however narrow and merciless, which his avarice might represent as compatible with their existence and usefulness.' p. 36.

Let the impartial reader who is desirous to ascertain, not what the condition of the negroes in the colonies was '*prior to* 1788,' but what it is now, refer, on this subject, to the consolidated slave law of Jamaica, of 1816, cap. 25. He will there find it enacted, (though Mr. Stephen, professing, as he does, to give a view of the colonial laws, did not find it convenient to speak of enactments so completely subversive of his canon) that all the negroes shall have, exclusive of Sundays, twenty-six days at least in the year, to cultivate their own lands, section 4th:—that they shall have half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner, section 20:—that they shall have the usual holidays which cus-

tom has established at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, section 21 :—that no sugar mills shall work between seven o'clock on Saturday evening, and five on Monday morning, section 5 :—that a woman having six children alive, and to take care of, shall be exempted from other labour, section 12 : — and that a statement on oath of the clothing served to all slaves annually shall be rendered to the vestries of each parish to be approved of according to law, section 8.

These excellent regulations, as well understood by the negroes as by the white people, and fully acted up to, speak a different language from Mr. Stephen, and completely disprove his canon.

That the twenty-six days allowed by law to the slaves for the cultivation of their lands are sufficient, and more than sufficient, we have the authority of Mr. Stephen himself. Enlarging on a favourite topic, the starvation of the 'poor oppressed bondmen,' he asks, p. 91. 'Why are these 'poor beings, who, in a climate, and on a soil, *that 'would yield them a year's subsistence for the labour of 'a week*, worked hard, not for one week in the year, 'but the whole fifty-two, to endure nevertheless 'the miseries of famine ?' In this instance it is evident the colonists are more liberal than the philanthropist thinks necessary, as it is undeniable, that instead of a *week*, they allow 'these poor beings' a *month* (twenty-six working days) to cultivate their lands.

In a note in the same page, he says, 'Mr. Barham, in his Considerations on the abolition of slavery, has repeated this statement (that from the exuberant productiveness of a tropical soil and climate, the labour of a week will furnish subsistence for a year) which his brethren, the sugar planters, have often made before. A hundred West India authorities might be cited to the same effect; and I have one at present before me, which may be the more satisfactory, because it comes from *Haiti*, where the theory is in some degree reduced into practice; the negroes there working for themselves at their own choice, and many of them doubtless no more than the subsistence of their family demands.'

If this is the case — if all the labour performed by the emancipated slaves of St. Domingo amounts only to one week in the year, it would surely be superfluous to look for any other argument to satisfy the people of England what they are to expect from their colonies when placed, as proposed, in the same enviable situation. How far such idleness is a blessing to an ignorant people, or likely to promote their civilization, is a question not difficult to answer.

To conclude on this subject, the law of Jamaica, as has been shewn, provides that 'the slaves shall have twenty-six working days, at least, in the year allowed them to cultivate their own lands, besides the usual holidays which custom has esta-

'blished at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide for 'their diversions.' This number of days, and often more, is given to them; the overseer of every plantation in Jamaica, solemnly swears to the fact;—yet Mr. S. asks, 'Why are these poor beings worked 'hard, not for one week in the year, *but the whole 'fifty-two?*' And the Edinburgh Review with equal effrontery asserts, 'that the slaves must devote the 'greater part of Sunday to working in their pro-'vision grounds, *no other time being allowed them for 'that purpose.*' No. 79, p. 228.

Master's discretion in punishing his slaves limited by laws.

'Rule IV.—The master may imprison, beat, scourge, wound, and otherwise afflict or injure the person of his slave, at his discretion.' p. 36.

With what unblushing effrontery is this false assertion brought forward and made an undisputed canon! Any person in London may steal, rob, murder; but if he does, it is at his peril: and any person in Jamaica who wounds or injures the person of a slave, must equally abide the consequences of such flagitious conduct. It is true, the master has a discretion in punishing his slaves; but, instead of being absolute as represented in the canon, Mr. S. well knows that it is limited to the infliction of thirty-nine stripes. To this canon then, as to his delineation of negro slavery in general, we may apply the line of the poet regarding the Popish plot—

'Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies.'

To inflame the public feeling against the colonists,

he quotes, under this head, an obsolete statute, which long disgraced the little island of Barbadoes, by which the murder of a slave subjected the perpetrator to only a small fine; and, commenting on the words of the act by which that law was repealed, and which are not perhaps the fittest that might have been employed, he takes ample advantage, by putting the worst construction on them, of a circumstance he himself notices in his preface, that, 'in 'many or most of the colonies, acts were drawn up 'and passed, *without any professional aid*, by the 'planters and other members of Assembly.' p. 60.

Colonial and Roman slavery compared.

Mr. Stephen, throughout his book, strives by every sort of artifice to aggravate the slavery of the British West India colonies, and represent it as infinitely more degrading, cruel, and oppressive, than any other that ever existed among mankind. For this purpose it is often necessary not only to exaggerate the severites of our colonial slave laws, as they existed thirty or forty years ago, and to impute to his countrymen there, the most unheard-of cruelties, but also to palliate the undeniable severity of other slave codes. The following is a curious specimen of this:

'The Roman father might put his son *to death, as well as his slave, was entitled to the property he acquired*, and might exercise over him the same *inferior* authorities of *scourging, imprisoning, chaining, and even selling into slavery.* Nay, the Roman law, barbarous as it was in regard to slaves, carried the power of the parent higher than that of the master; for the son might be three

times sold; the slave only once. If the latter was enfranchised by the buyer, he was for ever free; but the son, though manumitted by a first and second purchaser, might be sold a third time by the father. It is certainly some excuse for the Roman lawgivers, and if the manners of their country, at the time of the introduction of the law of the twelve tables, were fully known, perhaps *the excuse might rise almost into a justification*, that the *paterfamilias* was not intrusted with greater power over his slaves, than over his own children, who were equally amenable to the same MILD DOMESTIC FORUM.' p. 43.

God forbid that the slavery of the British colonies should have any features of resemblance to that among the Romans, where all the captives, during the endless wars in which the republic was engaged, were devoted indiscriminately to the sword or to slavery; where the amphitheatre echoed to the groans of the dying gladiators, or the earth itself laboured with the multitude of crucified slaves! How extremely uncandid and disingenuous in our author, even on *his own* description of it, to call that atrocious system a *mild domestic forum*; and to represent that of our colonies in the West as tyrannical and oppressive in comparison!

Perhaps the reader may ask if there were no circumstances to 'excuse,' if not to justify our early colonists for the severity of *their* laws; — such as the savage character of the newly imported Africans, some tribes of whom were altogether cannibals, and the great number of them as compared with their masters? But he will look in vain to Mr. Stephen for excuse or apology *for them*.

Slavery of Hindostan.

The leniency of the slavery of Hindostan, is proved by an argument very similar to that by which the *mild domestic forum* of the Roman slavery is established. It seems that *there* a person has the same power of chastising 'with a lash or a bamboo twig,' his wife, son, pupil, or younger brother, as his male or female slave. After quoting a law to this effect, Mr. S. goes on—'Here we see that the slave of 'Hindostan is, in point of corporal punishment, 'subject only to the same domestic authority, which 'equally extends over the wife, the son, the pupil, 'or younger brother of his master; and other in-'stances of the leniency of this bondage will here-'after appear.' p. 42.

The argument is a strong one: a man must be greatly more humane to his male and female slaves, from having been accustomed to use the lash and the bamboo twig on his wife, his son, his pupil, and younger brother; and the consumers of East India sugar must find its sweetness doubled from such a convincing proof of the leniency of the slavery of Hindostan! How strange, that so simple a method of bettering the condition of the slaves in our colonies should never till now have been suggested!

Corporal punishment.

'Rule V.—These harsh powers of the master may all be exercised, not by himself only in person, but by his representatives and agents of every description, and by every person, whether bond or free, who is clothed in any manner with his authority.' p. 46.

The British public is ever ready to lend an ear to tales of distress, and its indignation is easily roused

by the recital of acts of oppression. This generous feeling, it is not difficult for the artful to work upon; but surely few can attach belief to so extravagant a charge as this, unsupported by proof, and at direct variance with every known principle of human feeling and action. Even an animal dependent on us is regarded with some degree of tenderness: and is it to be believed that a West Indian can be so void of affection for his purchased servant, a fellow-creature so entirely dependent on him, and on whose welfare he himself so much depends, as to authorise his representatives and agents of every description to beat, scourge, wound, and otherwise afflict or injure him at their discretion? I pity the man who has the heart to believe this.

That corporal punishment forms a part of the system of slavery is not denied; for minor offences it is perhaps the only penal restraint of practical enforcement, in a state of society where every master has a direct interest in screening his slave from criminal prosecutions, which would necessarily occasion expence and a temporary loss of the culprit's labour. If a servant in England is negligent, or disobedient, or commits an immoral act, his master has the ready means of punishment by turning him adrift in the world; and if he is guilty of a crime that subjects him to the penalties of the law, his master has but little interest in screening him from its vengeance. Very different is the case of a slave. If *he* offends by negligence or disobedience, theft, desertion, &c.

it is obvious his master cannot punish him in the same manner, by turning him adrift, and his punishment by a court of law cannot be accomplished without considerable expence and trouble. To these circumstances we must ascribe the power of punishment entrusted with the masters, wherever slavery has existed in the world. Among the Romans, this power extended to the taking away of life; and in the earlier days of our own colonies, when the slave population consisted of only newly imported lawless Africans, it appears that corporal punishment was altogether unlimited, and even the killing of a slave was punished only by a small fine. But this arbitrary and unlimited power, necessary perhaps then, is not now required, and is not now possessed by the master. In Jamaica, the murder of a slave was long ago made felony, and punished by death: more recently corporal punishment was limited to the infliction of thirty-nine stripes; and only a few years ago, the use of chains, except for the confinement of public criminals, was altogether abolished. These changes are not to be attributed to greater humanity in the colonists, so much as to the more improved habits of the slaves; and as they continue to advance in civilization, the laws regarding them will continue to be meliorated accordingly. In the meantime, to diminish the power of the masters below what is necessary to maintain order and subordination, however well meant, would not benefit, but injure the slaves; no one, who has had the means of

knowing what the negroes at present are, would even on their account advise that a limited power of correction should not be possessed by their masters.

But the use of a power does not justify the abuse of it, if such a charge can be established. Mr. Stephen, in considering this question, first assumes that a master and others under him *may* commit the most horrid cruelties; concludes, of course, that they do; and proceeds, in his usual style, to execrate the tyrannical oppressors, and invoke commiseration for their victims. We shall not follow him here; neither can it be necessary to ransack old records for obsolete or repealed laws; as the question, in the minds of impartial people, is not what the laws *were*, but what they *are;* and what the condition of the slaves in our colonies is at the present day.

By reference to the slave law, passed in 1816, cap. 25, section 27, it will be seen that no subordinate person can, for any offence, punish a negro with more than ten stripes; and that the overseer or owner himself can only go the length of thirty-nine; and this, when inflicted, is often the punishment of crimes for which hundreds in England annually pay the forfeit of their lives. Mr. Stephen sneers at this law: 'A man might laugh,' he says, 'if compassion 'did not inspire a graver emotion, at a restriction 'like this,' p. 40; and then proceeds to prove, in what he no doubt deems a very satisfactory way, that the restriction amounts to nothing, or is only calculated to produce a 'continuity of punishment,

'as the invention of the master must be very barren 'to be sure, were he at any loss to *find reasons* 'enough for using his whip as often as he pleases.' Why, Shylock, raging for his pound of flesh, was a merciful man, compared with Britons in the West Indies, who set their inventions to work to 'find reasons' to indulge themselves in the pleasure of whipping innocent men, women, and children, their own dependants, and entitled to look up to them for protection!

Plantation management.

To give an idea of plantation management, and of the checks there are to prevent an abuse of power, it is proper to mention, that estates in Jamaica are managed by overseers appointed by the proprietors, or their attorneys. The overseer again employs book-keepers and tradesmen to attend to the subordinate duties of the plantation, making the number of white people in all, equal to about one for every fifty slaves, which, averaged at three hundred to each sugar plantation, gives five or six white persons to each property. The overseer presides at the head of the plantation table, and it is almost unnecessary to add, that upon his prudence, humanity, and good sense, depends not only the prosperity of the estate, but in a great measure, the comfort of the white people, and to some extent also that of the negroes. About fifteen or twenty years ago, it will readily be admitted, the young men in subordinate situations were allowed too great latitude in the punishment of the slaves, and the same remark applies to the

drivers or head-men; but of late years, a very great change has taken place. No book-keeper or tradesman, on well managed properties, is now suffered to use the whip at all, or to lift his hand against a slave; all they can do is to represent the case to the overseer, or perhaps send the culprit to the stocks till this is done. A fair hearing is then afforded to both parties: if the book-keeper establishes his charge, the negro is punished; if not, he not unfrequently loses his own situation. The complaint that negro evidence is rejected, does not apply here; at this summary court, in settling petty differences between negro and negro, and between the negroes and subordinate white or other free persons, it has every attention paid to it; and they are by no means deficient in abilities to state their own case.

Description of the drivers or head negroes.

But it is not only the subordinate white persons, who, according to Mr. Stephen, are clothed with an unbounded licence 'to beat, scourge, wound, and 'otherwise afflict and injure' the slaves; 'it would 'be well,' says he, 'comparatively, for plantation 'slaves, if the delegation ended here; it descends 'also to the drivers.' p. 48.

This charge applies to times past, but not to the present. Formerly, as above stated, the drivers, as well as the book-keepers, had too great latitude in punishing slaves; but this is not now permitted. Assuming, however, that the drivers are entrusted with an unlimited power of the whip over their brethren, Mr. Stephen has a fine subject for his

pencil. He describes them as being 'selected from 'among the most athletic,' to make sure that they have full strength to satiate their cruelty of disposition; and as 'plump, robust, and pre-eminent in 'health and strength,' (p. 55.) that they may appear the more formidable rivals in the *amours* he represents them as having with the men's wives under their authority; and, having drawn an imaginary picture of horror, he concludes by imploring 'the pure and 'compassionate heart to consider what, in such 'cases, is likely to be the odious use of their power, 'and of the terror they are able to excite.' p. 56.

Now what is the fact? That in nineteen cases out of twenty, the driver or principal superintendant upon an estate, the only responsible negro, instead of being athletic, plump, and robust, is an old grey-headed man, selected in consideration of his good conduct, intelligence, and established character for sobriety, attention, and honesty, and the influence he possesses among the other slaves on the property; an influence gained, as in other communities, by meriting their respect, and the more strongly felt when old age superadds a degree of veneration. Next to a good overseer, the welfare of a plantation depends mainly on a good driver, or *head-man,* as he is more properly called by the negroes. He superintends the labour of the principal or great gang; but this is only a secondary part of his duty: he must be a man who has the interest of his master's property at heart; he must have an eye

to every department, — see that the cattle are regularly worked, — that the watchmen do their duty in protecting the cane-fields from being trespassed upon by stock, and the provision-fields from depredations of thieves. Above all, he must be a man whose good character commands respect among his fellow-labourers: and in this case, his influence and authority are truly valuable. Many petty crimes may be committed by the slaves, and concealed from the overseer, which cannot so easily be concealed from the driver; against such, of course, he acts as a salutary check. These are the qualifications required in the *head-man* on a plantation; and considering how important it is to the overseer to have such an assistant, it is manifest how deep an interest he has in selecting the best qualified, and how unimportant it is that the person be ATHLETIC. It is true he carries a whip—a practice established at a period, and during a state of things, when the use of it was perhaps absolutely necessary, and which custom yet continues, although it has now become little more than the badge of his office, as the accustomed amount of work is known by the negroes and performed without coercion.

He invariably, also, carries a long staff with a crutch or crook on its head, round which his whip is attached, and which serves him to rest upon. Instead, therefore, of an 'athletic, plump, and robust, young man, exercising his strength in cutting and slashing a parcel of unhappy creatures placed under

his unmerciful authority, and indulging himself in licentious amours; go to a field of labourers in Jamaica, and you will see a venerable old man standing behind them, leaning over his staff, and engaged in conversation with some one of the gang, among whom as many jokes are passed (often at the expence of the white people, whose foibles they are not long in discovering), and as much noisy mirth prevails, as in a field of labourers in the mother country; generally, indeed, much more.

To expose the fictions circulated in England under the title of the *Driving System, &c.* we would only ask of an impartial person to go and see our labourers in the field, and say if their appearance bespeaks that starvation,—if the work they are performing bespeaks that oppression, or if the mirth that prevails bespeaks that sense of degradation and broken-heartedness, of which he has heard such affecting reports.

False and unmerited as the charges against the white people of the colonies are, they are not more unfounded than those brought against the head-negroes, who, taken all in all (and I speak from a personal knowledge of a great many), form a body of people, who, notwithstanding their skins are black, would command respect in any country. Mr. Stephen himself says, they are selected from 'the most intelligent' of the slaves; which is true: but on what principle he can satisfy his friends, that, *the most intelligent* of this class of people being such

merciless and depraved characters as he represents them, the general mass are so amiable, so little likely to deserve punishment, and so well prepared for general emancipation, is a mystery we cannot comprehend.

The Whip. After the drivers, follows a description of the whip; and, considering what kind of 'athletic' hands it is placed in, the reader cannot be surprised to learn, that at 'one stroke it will fairly cut through the tough hide of a mule!' The truth, however, is, that the cat used in the mother country, whatever may be represented or believed to the contrary, is by far the more formidable instrument of the two. A few years ago, a gentleman, not unknown in the literary world, and who is a considerable proprietor in Jamaica, made an attempt to do away with the whip on his estates, and to substitute the cat in its stead. One accordingly was prepared, and proved on application so insignificant, that the negroes laughed at it, and by way of derision called it *pussy*. While things were in this state, the commander of a ship of war, then lying in Port Royal, happened to call at the estate. Among other subjects of conversation, this of *pussy* being brought on the carpet, the captain requested a sight of it; and after a hearty laugh, said, if worth sending for, he would let his boatswain prepare one as a pattern, such as is commonly used in the navy. This was done; nothing more was said of *pussy*. In a few

months great complaints were made against the cat; and the people were almost in open rebellion at what they boldly termed an unlawful instrument of punishment. Of course it was laid aside.

It would indeed be a blessed consummation, if corporal punishments could be altogether dispensed with among mankind; but if this cannot yet be accomplished in a nation, that boasts itself at the head of civilization, it is surely unreasonable to look for it among a people only emerging from barbarism. The disuse of the whip ought, however, to keep pace with the advances made in civilization; and let those who have seen, say, if it has not done so in the colonies? As far as my observation goes, there is not now one punishment inflicted for twenty that were at the time I went to Jamaica, in 1803.

On some plantations, the whip has ceased to be exhibited in the field, and it is much to be wished that this were universal; but what is practicable on one estate, is not always so on another. In the character of the negroes, even on two adjoining estates, there is often a wide difference: one of the gangs will be industrious, sober, and well behaved; the other prone to desertion, and with no disposition to work, either for themselves or their masters. Here, it is impossible to adopt exactly the same mode of management: but the carrying of a whip in the field ought to be discontinued in every case where it is practicable; and unquestionably it is carried at present on many plantations merely from custom, and as a badge of authority, where there

exists no real necessity. This is improper; and brings us to the question, whether the law ought not at once to put an end to so degrading a practice? Desirable as its disuse would be, I confess I should hesitate to recommend such a measure, from a dread of misapprehension, on the part of the slaves, of the *object or extent* of a law so directly interfering between them and their masters. In some cases, it might lead to increased delinquency, and consequent severity; and even more serious consequences might be apprehended. But whatever may be the duty of the legislature, that of every individual concerned in the management of negroes clearly is, to abolish as fast as he can a practice so revolting; and which, generally speaking, is no longer necessary, however dangerous the immediate abolition of it by law might be.

In Jamaica, punishment is seldom inflicted on the day the crime has been committed; but early on the following morning. There could not, I think, be any good objection to this being made peremptory by law; nor to the presence of another free person besides the overseer being made necessary, as has been proposed. Records of punishments have long been kept on many plantations, and are proper; but to make the manager swear to them, seems a measure of doubtful utility. A man capable of inflicting cruel or improper punishments, would scarcely stick at an oath. The good do not require such restraints, and the bad would not be restrained by them. Fortunately,

there are more powerful checks on such wickedness, which will be noticed as we proceed.

'RULE IV.—Slaves have no legal rights of property in things real or personal; and whatever property they may acquire, belongs in point of law to the master.' p. 58. Property of slaves respected.

Here the British West Indians are put to shame not only by the Roman, the Spartan, the German, the Polish, the English, the Spanish, and the Portuguese slave laws, but even by that of the coast of Guinea!

Yet, on our author's own showing, the most of these codes, or the more important of them, were the same, or harsher than that in our colonies, though he labours to draw distinctions, disadvantageous to his countrymen. In point of fact, the right of a slave to his property in the West Indies is held equally sacred as his master's right to his estate. Even Mr. Stephen concludes with a reluctant acknowledgement, qualified as any thing he must admit in their favour always is, that 'with a few exceptions, he believes' the master never asserts his right to his slave's property; and I shall only add, that if the Romans, whom he sets so far above Englishmen of the present day, could never have been accused by their most inveterate enemy of asserting a title to the property or *peculium* of their slaves, it is manifest there would have been no occasion for '*many anxious provisions* in the Imperial code,' to protect it to them. But such is Mr. Stephen's virulence against his own countrymen, that every thing is with 'metaphysical subtlety' turned against them,

however obviously to common sense it makes in their favour; and when he has nothing else, he has always abuse for them. For this purpose, an anecdote is here introduced respecting a slave called Amachree, in New Calabar, who offered a hundred slaves for his freedom; an offer which, his master, who was a poor man, would gladly have accepted, but could not, from its being contrary to the law of that country that a purchased slave should become free. p. 60. The cruelty of such a law (not being a colonial law) is of course passed over; but the story serves to introduce the following most barbarous attack on the West Indian character:—

'From this country, I beg the reader to remark, slaves were brought to improve their happiness in the British West Indies; for such some of our planters, or their witnesses, were pleased to assert was the consequence, if not even the motive of their removal.

'A comparison between the states called Slavery in those two opposite quarters of the world, in point of treatment by the master, will belong to another part of this work; but I would here shortly infer from the fact related by Mr. Penny, that the poor African master was either *a miracle of generosity*, or he was not legally armed, like a West India planter, with the power of the dungeon, the chain, and the whip. 'A little of this *iron*,' said the poor but warlike barbarian, 'will win all that *gold*.' 'A little of this *thong*,' might the poor African master have said, had he possessed West Indian authority, 'will make you glad to give some part of that hundred-fold value of yours to relieve my necessities. I need not, therefore, solicit the state for a licence to supply my wants, by selling to you your freedom.' p. 61.

What other impression does this convey — what other is it meant to convey, but that 'the West 'India planters, legally armed with the power of the 'dungeon, the chain and the whip,' use that power to

extort from their humble labourers the fruits of their industry? For what purpose such a monstrous accusation was brought forward, it is impossible to conjecture; as in the very next passage he acknowledges it to be without the shadow of foundation. Must we suppose his disposition to calumniate the colonists too strong to be resisted, even when it can be indulged only at the expense of the most palpable inconsistency? Be this as it may, as the reader has seen, on Mr. Stephen's authority, that Englishmen in the colonies rob their slaves let him now learn from the same authority that they do not; marking the reluctance withw hich the concession is made, and deciding as he can between such opposite statements.

'It is indeed alleged by the colonial party, that though the master is legally entitled to all the property acquired by the slave, he never asserts that title; and, with a few exceptions, *I believe the proposition to be true.* The slave's little property is, indeed, sometimes seized by way of punishment, or as a mean of obtaining restitution of property suspected to have been stolen from the master; but upon purely sordid principles, I remember only one instance of such an exercise of the owner's power, and in that, his conduct was generally condemned.' p. 61.

Comfortable circumstances of the slaves in Jamaica, their allowances, &c.

The poverty and starvation of the West Indian labourers, at least as respects Jamaica, are as unfounded as the charges with regard to cruel and excessive punishment. However unaccountable it may appear to those who have taken their information from Mr. Stephen; however inconsistent with his description of their situation, and the rapacity of their owners, the truth nevertheless is, that the

great body of them are in easy comfortable circumstances; and not a few in the possession of actual wealth.

I shall here state a circumstance which I witnessed shortly before leaving Jamaica; not that there is any thing extraordinary in it, but because it may tend to give a more correct idea of the situation of the slaves. I was present when a gentleman, who owns about sixty-five negroes, delivered to them their annual allowance of clothing. The adults had each seven yards of baize, ten of osnaburgh, and four of linen check, with thread, a hat, cap, knife, and needles; being sufficient for three complete suits, one of woollen, and two of linen. Boys, girls, and children were served in similar proportions; the females, young and old, receiving in addition as much printed cotton each as would make a gown. Mothers took the allowances for their families, and some of them went away fully laden, with their little ones running about them. The master of these people had occasion to purchase a considerable quantity of provisions for the use of shipping, and very naturally gave a preference to his own people, as an encouragement to industry. From the recent introduction of island or treasury notes, the circulation of which had in a great measure superseded that of silver, he had been unable for two or three months to procure small money to pay for these petty purchases, and his clerk had, on receiving 100 or 200 plantains or parcels of yams, given a ticket of acknowledgement. Means being provided, notice

was given, when they came for their clothing, to bring those tickets for payment, and I saw upwards of £30 paid in dollars to the industrious individuals of this gang, for articles sold to their master alone, in less than three months; while they had probably sold as much, or twice as much in the public market. Of course they were not all industrious; but to those who received it, this was entirely surplus wealth, to be stored, or spent in luxuries, as they chose; for they had their houses and land (with ample time to cultivate it), clothing, medical attendance, and in short, every necessary provided for them by their master. It should also be stated, as refuting a distinction Mr. Stephen lays great stress on, that these people are not mechanics, but field-negroes and jobbers. I may add, that several of them are married, and attend church regularly, well dressed, with linen shirts, shoes and stockings, and cloth coats, the quality of which is scarcely inferior to that of their master; nor would they use any kind of ceremony in rubbing shoulders with such a personage as our author himself, in taking their seats inside the church, instead of 'peeping in with a timid and wondering 'countenance, in order to gratify their curiosity, at 'one of the doors or windows.' p. 215. In the parish of St. Thomas in the East, with which I am more particularly acquainted, I affirm from the evidence of my own eyesight, that the congregations in the several places of worship, of which there are six, consisting principally of slaves, would bear compa-

rison, in point of dress and orderly deportment, with the generality of country congregations in Britain.* Not a few of the slaves, coming from a distance, ride their own horses to church. In the little village of Bath, where there is a chapel of ease, and a Wesleyan meeting-house, the number of their horses which during divine service are tied up under the shade of the trees in the street, never fails to attract the attention of strangers. By the law, indeed, slaves (for no good reason that I can see) are not allowed to own horses; but in this, as in many other instances, the practice is better than the law. It is almost needless to observe, that they purchase their Sunday dresses for themselves, the clothing allowed them by their masters being used only for working dresses, and frequently sold by them when not wanted.

Independent air of the negroes.

They receive their allowances of every kind with the same independent feeling that labourers in this country receive their wages, and perhaps with even greater independence of manner. In taking his annual allowance of clothing, a negro examines minutely that he has full measure, that no one receives more than he does, and that what he receives is free from blemish. If he happens to get the end or out-

* Mr. Trew, Rector of St. Thomas in the East, Jamaica, has transmitted to this society an extract from his parish register, by which it appears that from the 14th December, 1817, to the 21st of March, 1824, he has married 3488 slaves, and baptized 2056. Mr. Stainsley states, that he has 800 regular attendants, and 200 communicants.—*Reports of the Incorporated Society for the Conversion and religious Instruction of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Colonies*, 1824.

side of a web in the least rubbed or damaged, he returns it with the utmost indignity, and will take none if he does not get it as good as others. In fact, there is no feature in the negro character that would strike a stranger more strongly, than the air of independence he will find, where, perhaps, he expected the most abject servility. This may appear paradoxical; but the truth is, a negro is a very different being from what he is commonly represented: acknowledging fully the master's right to his labour, he justly considers the master bound to support him, and feels under no obligation whatever for the house and land he holds of him, or the other allowances which law or usage assign him for his labour. He knows that for withholding that labour he is liable to punishment by the master who supports him; but he knows also the service required of him, and that he has nothing to fear when that service is performed. He has *his own time* also; and if any part of it happens to be required by his master, it must be repaid. If a house-servant, for instance, is employed on Sunday, another must take his place some other day in the week, that he may have the day due to him. If a negro makes a feast, and kills a hog for the occasion, this, of course, is at his own expence; but if, when sick, and in the hospital, a few of his own poultry (from a difficulty in procuring others) are killed for his use, he not unfrequently demands and receives payment for them; it being considered as much the master's business to supply him, under

these circumstances, with poultry, as with wine, if he stands in need of it.

Anecdote of the late Simon Taylor, Esq.

As Mr. Stephen has given an anecdote to shew how the property of slaves is respected in Africa, and intimated what, according to *his* belief, would have been the conduct of a British West India planter in such a case, I shall take leave to give one also; and this I do the more readily, as the circumstances of it came within my own knowledge.

In the garden fronting the spacious mansion-house of Holland, the property of the late honourable Simon Taylor, in the parish of St. Thomas in the East, a large cluster of cocoa-nut trees for many years shut out a view of the sea, and obstructed from the house a necessary circulation of air. They were originally planted by the proprietor merely for ornament; but the more substantial use of them—the fruit, was not lost sight of by the negroes; who soon considered, not only the fruit, but the trees as their own property—each claiming, as he happened first to have taken possession. In process of time, as new trees sprang from the seed of the old, these were claimed in like manner, till a perfect thicket was reared up, to the serious injury, not only of the mansion-house, but also of the breeze-mill, when the wind was northerly. Still Mr. Taylor, from extreme delicacy in interfering with what his people claimed as their right, would not allow the trees to be cut down: nor was it till 1807, when the evil greatly increasing, and some deaths having taken

place, attributed to the house being so much covered, that, at the request of Mr. Hunter, the manager, he consented—provided the sanction of his negroes could be obtained by giving them a compensation, but not otherwise; for, added he, *they have long claimed these trees as their own, and that claim I never shall dispute with them.* These instructions were faithfully attended to; the overseer durst not act otherwise; and not a tree was felled until the person claiming it had received what he acknowledged to be a full compensation. Thus Mr. Taylor paid to his own labourers £1. 6*s.* 8*d.* for each cocoanut tree cut in his own garden.

Slaves regarded as property.

'RULE VII.—The Slave, in the British Colonies, is at all times liable to be sold, or otherwise aliened, at the will of the master, as absolutely in all respects, as cattle, or any other personal effects.

'RULE VIII.—He is also at all times, liable to be sold by process of law, for satisfaction of the debts of a living, or the debts or bequests of a deceased master, at the suit of creditors or legatees.

'RULE IX.—In consequence of a transfer in either of these ways, or by the authority of his immediate owner, the slave may be at any time exiled, in a moment, and for ever, from his home, his family, and the colony in which he was born, or in which he has long been settled.' p. 63.

These rules classed together by Mr. Stephen, briefly amount to this—that slaves are held to be property, and sold as such.* From the researches he has made into ancient slavery, on this point, it appears, 'that in *some* countries at least, and under

* Circa illos quoque servos, qui bellica vi in eam conditionem fuerant abstracti, nec non qui pretio emuntur, receptum, ut non secus ac aliæ res nostræ in quemcunque placeret transferri, et ad instar mercium venire possent.— *Puffendorf, De Officio Hominis et Civis. Lib. II. Cap.* 4.

'*some* particular circumstances, men in this condi-
'tion *might* be alienated without the domain, or
'without the whole of the domain, to which they
'belonged.' p. 64.

But 'of the liability of the slaves to be seized and
'sold separate from the lands they cultivate, by the
'master's creditors for the payment of his debts, it,
'may safely, I believe, be pronounced, that a pre-
'cedent for such cruel injustice is not to be found in
'any part of the Old World.' p. 68.

Granting it were so, what is the difference to the slave, between being sold by the creditors, or the creditors compelling the master to sell him,—which they must, by some means, have had in their power? Mr. Stephen, who has, it seems, a perfect knowledge of the customs, institutions, and state of society, among the various tribes, and tongues in Africa, assures us, that even barbarous Africa, the fountain-head of slavery, 'will not furnish a pattern of this 'feature of colonial despotism!" p. 71.

Slaves sold in families and allowed to choose a master.

Jamaica contains nearly one-half of all the slaves in the British West India colonies; and let me ask Mr. Stephen, if he ever heard of a slave being sold from thence to serve a new master in a distant island or territory? Or, if he ever heard of the wife and husband being sold to different masters in different counties in that island?

Not only are families sold together, but in general they are allowed to choose a master for themselves:

and to regulate sales under process of distress, when the owner has not this in his power, a law was passed nearly one hundred years ago, 8 Geo. II. cap. 6. sec. 9. which enacts, that slaves sold under writs of *Venditione*, shall be sold in families. Had this law passed since the agitation of the Registry question, Mr. Stephen, no doubt, would have ascribed it to 'his thunder,' as he has done all other changes favourable to the slaves; but as it was passed in 1735, it will be difficult to ascribe it to any other cause than a proper feeling of humanity on the part of the colonists themselves, even in those days of comparative barbarity. The philanthropists of the present day can therefore have little merit in calling attention to an evil, that was so long ago seen and remedied.

Sales of slaves.

Purchases of negroes often cannot be effected, in consequence of their dislike to go to the plantation they are wanted for; and the removal of them never is attempted but with their own free consent and approbation. Public sales are rare, but under process of distress; and although these look formidable in the marshal's advertisements, they are confined in a great measure to the slaves of poor people, who possess only a few, and whose slaves are commonly bettered by getting out of such hands. Where the slaves do not belong to poor people, the marshal's sales are frequently nominal, for the purpose of making good the conveyance on a private sale, as will afterwards be explained. On

occasion of such sales, I have seen the negroes openly abuse white persons who wished to purchase them, and of whose characters as masters, they had heard an unfavourable report. Their language was to this effect: — '*We know you well — we know what 'your plantation is — and how you treat your negroes. 'If you buy us you will lose your money; we will not 'have you for a master—we will not belong to you, nor 'work for you, if we should go and live in the woods.*' No man in his senses would wish to be the master of people who entertained sentiments of this kind towards him; or, indeed, of people who were not perfectly willing to belong to him. Proofs enough could be adduced of intended sales and transfers of slaves from place to place, which have been abandoned for no other reason than that the slaves, after sending a deputation of their own body to inspect the new situation, have decidedly objected to the removal.

It is complained of as a hardship in the sale of slaves, that 'if, as it *ordinarily* happens, the dearest 'relatives of the slave belong to neighbouring 'estates, and are the property of different owners; 'these, as well as his home, may be lost for ever, by 'the death of his immediate master.' p. 72.

Here our author's information is not correct; slaves are not *ordinarily* so connected; there may be indeed occasional cases of men forming connections on perhaps several different estates; but such characters generally give themselves little concern

about their offspring, who they know will be provided for by those to whom they belong; and even if removed from the scene of their licentious indulgence, they would not feel it any 'sad shipwreck of 'their happiness.' p. 72. The better description of people, who value the comfort of domestic happiness, attach themselves almost invariably on the plantation to which they belong.

It is also represented as a hardship, that, 'slaves 'are liable to be sold in the life-time of the owner 'for his debts, either by executions at law, or by 'decrees of courts of equity; and in the former 'case, the laws of the islands have expressly enacted, that they shall be severed from the estates to 'which they belong: for the marshal, or sheriff, is 'directed, not to take in execution, or sell, the land 'of the defendant, until he has previously sold his 'slaves, and only in the event of the latter not producing a full satisfaction of the debt.' p. 74.

Mr. S. here refers to court 'acts of the different islands,' but has not quoted them. The law of Jamaica provides, that 'for payment of debts and 'legacies, where other goods and chattels are not 'sufficient to satisfy them, then so many slaves as 'are necessary may be sold,' 50 Geo. III. c. 21. But here the object clearly is to prevent slaves being sold, if there are other goods and chattels; and if the law directs that slaves shall be sold in preference to the land, the reason is, that *a few* of them may be sufficient to discharge the debt, and the

rest will continue to enjoy their homes; whereas, selling the land first, might displace the whole of the people settled upon it, and the master with them. But such executions are rare: if a planter's debt is small, compared with the value of his property, he easily finds accommodation: if it is heavy, he grants a security on his land and slaves, and in this case, they go together. Even in the case of legacies, the almost universal custom is, that the heir, or residuary legatee, burdens himself with them, and keeps the property together.

Sales of slaves, by the provost marshal, under writs of execution, or *venditioni exponas,* which present so disagreeable a spectacle, are yet an evil of much less magnitude or extent than is generally supposed in England. Such sales are almost exclusively confined to the slaves of coloured persons, and the lower class of whites, who seldom are landowners, and whose slaves, employed as menials or mechanics, working wherever employment can be found, have not the same local attachments as the great body of slaves permanently settled on the plantations; and, consequently, if they are more subject to a transfer, they are less affected by it; not unfrequently indeed, they are much benefited. Moreover, these sales so offensive in appearance, are in many cases *a mere form,* to convey a valid title to encumbered property, when, in point of fact, the sale has been by private bargain, with the previous consent of the slaves to belong to the purcha-

ser — often the person who has them in his employment on hire. For instance, I may own twenty negroes who have been hired for eight or ten years on some particular plantation. I get embarrassed, or die, with judgments on record against me; in either case, these judgments are a bar to a private sale, as I cannot myself, nor, in the case of my death, can my executors, grant a valid title; and to get over the difficulty, an arrangement is made to allow the provost marshal to make a nominal sale. This gives to the transaction the revolting appearance of a forced sale under an execution, while, in point of fact, the slaves continue in their homes, and become attached to the plantation on which they were formerly hired.

Notwithstanding 'the commercial character of 'sugar estates, the ruin of the planters, the mort-'gages, sales by execution at law,' &c. dwelt on by our author, not on account of the sufferings to the proprietors, but as occasioning the removal of slaves from their homes, I have not, during a residence of twenty years in St. Thomas in the East, one of the largest parishes in Jamaica, known more than two instances there of the slaves being removed from the sugar estates on which they had been settled. These cases occured at Hampton Court, and Airy Castle estates, which were thrown up, and from which the slaves, much to their joy, were removed in a body to the more fertile domains of Golden Grove and Duckenfield Hall, in the same neighbour-

hood; where they may now be considered as permanently attached to the soil, whoever may hold the titles of the estates.

It has been stated, that the slaves sold under executions, are almost all the property of the lower class of whites, and the coloured people who became possessed of them while the African trade was open, or have succeeded to them since. Among other changes, which, since the abolition of that trade, time has been effecting in the colonies, it is not one of the least important, that the negroes are gradually getting into fewer hands. From the people of colour they are passing to the jobbing gangs of the middle class of white people; and from these again to the plantations, where, in not many years, they will be all fixed, and sales of slaves, except as attached to the soil, will be almost unknown. Amidst all the difficulties of the late disastrous years to the planters, this change has made progress, and a few years of colonial prosperity would, in a great measure, attach the whole body of slaves in the island to the soil. Humanity must wish to see this happy change accomplished; yet such is the perverted view unfortunately taken in the mother country of all colonial matters, that many consider friendship to the slaves can only be evinced by hostility to the masters—that whatever is beneficial to the one class, must be prejudicial to the other; and hence it has been again and again asserted in the House of Commons, that the

prosperity of the planter is injurious to the slave!

General Washington.

The circumstance of General WASHINGTON enfranchising his slaves by will, is here introduced in a note, p. 73, 'and shews,' says Mr. Stephen, 'impressively what *he* thought of slavery in general; 'and WASHINGTON, be it remembered, did not 'judge of the state by report,' as too many do in England, and on the report of those who themselves have it on report.

With due submission, the circumstances in which WASHINGTON was placed, were not of an ordinary kind; and he is not a pattern which the generality of mankind can be expected to follow. He was selected by Providence as the man who should have the honour of enfranchising his country, and delivering it from an oppression, not unlike, though much inferior in violence and pertinacity, to that with which a party now wishes to crush the less powerful colonies of the present day. He had no family; and if it had been otherwise, the offspring of the hero, who is venerated as '*first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his country*,' never could have known distress or difficulty. Yet this man was a slave-owner, and a planter in a British colony; and what is even more strange, out of the four chief magistrates who have presided over that country of freemen by the choice of the people, three have been selected from the slave states, where, accord-

ing to Mr. Stephen, the exercise of despotic power, the long administration of an iron system, and the contagion of local habits and prejudices, extinguish humanity and convert men into brutes. p. 55.

This circumstance—a very extraordinary one, certainly, if Mr. Stephen's remark be well founded, may perhaps be better accounted for by another writer, whose authority is entitled to fully as much respect. 'Masters of slaves,' says Mr. Burke, 'are 'by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. 'Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a 'kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there, 'that freedom, as in countries where it is a common 'blessing, and broad and general as the air, may be 'joined with much abject toil, with great misery, 'with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks 'among them like something that is more noble and 'liberal. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; 'such were our Gothic ancestors; such in our days 'were the Poles; and such will be all masters of 'slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In them 'haughtiness combines with the spirit of freedom, 'fortifies it, and renders it invincible.'

State of slavery in the United States.

Speaking of General WASHINGTON's benevolence, an opportunity is taken to say, 'he well knew the 'true nature and effect of that state (slavery); but 'in a country where it is generally *far milder than* '*in our colonies*, so much so, as to consist with a 'very rapid increase of population'—. p. 73. Now

that the slaves are increasing in the state of Virginia, and have as yet decreased in the island of Jamaica, may be true, and is to be accounted for by causes which will be afterwards noticed; but whether slavery is milder in the former than in the latter, let the reader judge from the following facts. *There* slaves are sold without any regard to the separation of families; *there* a regular traffic in slaves is carried on; dealers, as I have witnessed, traverse the country to purchase them, and thousands are annually shipped from the port of Norfolk in Virginia, to cultivate sugar on the fertile but sickly swamps in Louisiana. *There* also banishment is the condition of manumission: a master can give freedom to a slave, only upon condition of expelling him from the state. What would be said of such a law in Jamaica?

As another proof that the American laws affecting the negroes, are '*far milder*' than those of the British West India colonies, I quote the following section of the law of South Carolina 'for the better regulation 'of free negroes and persons of colour.'

'And be it further enacted, That if any vessel shall come into any port or harbour of this state, from any other state or foreign port, having on board any free negroes or persons of colour, as cooks, stewards, mariners, or in other employment on board of the said vessel, such free negroes or persons of colour shall be liable to be seized and confined in gaol, until the said vessel shall clear out and depart from this state: and that when the said vessel is ready to sail, the captain of the said vessel shall be bound to carry away the said free negro or free person of colour, and to pay the expenses of his detention; and in case of his neglect or refusal so to do, he shall be liable to be indict-

ed, and on conviction thereof, shall be fined in a sum not less than one thousand dollars, and imprisoned not less than two months; and such free negroes or persons of colour shall be deemed and taken as absolute slaves, and sold in conformity to the provisions of the act passed the 20th day of December, 1820.

Another section of the act prohibits any free negro or person of colour, who shall leave the state, from returning thereto.

Such is the state of slavery in the most ancient slave colonies established by Britain, and such the opinion there entertained of a free coloured population; an opinion, founded on experience, however much at variance with that of those benevolent enthusiasts in England, who have acquired such an influence in the council of the nation; and whose errors have endangered the existence of possessions, for which Buonaparte sighed, with Europe prostrate at his feet. Ships, colonies, and commerce, he well knew had enabled England to contend with him; these he promised to France as a reward of her exertions; these England is now sacrificing at the shrine of misguided enthusiasm.

Removal of slaves from one island to another.

Treating of the sale of slaves, an affecting picture is drawn by our author, of the extreme cruelty of removing them from the barren Bahama islands to a more fertile soil, p. 81, 82. To such removals I believe they are no longer subject; home and country are dear to all, and there is something exceedingly painful in contemplating a people compelled to abandon them by whatever circumstances; yet this

hardship, described with so much feeling, was not peculiar to the slaves. How many of the poor Irish, possessing a land proverbial for its fertility, would at the present moment consider it the greatest blessing to be removed in families, and put down in New Holland or Canada! And surely it will not be said that they are less attached to their homes than the oppressed slaves, who, according to Mr. Stephen, 'are driven like beasts, worked beyond their 'strength, stinted of necessary food, and thus have 'their days shortened.' p. 82. Few endearments can home possess to the wretched being who has found in it nothing but labour, and hunger, and oppression, even to the shortening of his miserable existence? yet (such are the contradictions people fall into in supporting false theories) in order to give to the removal of a negro all the distress and anguish of the most cruel banishment, it is necessary to suppose him leaving for ever a home where he enjoyed every comfort and happiness, while in the same breath we are assured no such comforts fall to his lot. God forbid that Mr. Stephen's account of their state and situation were correct! but if it were, it is clear their removal from one home to another could be no such terrible aggravation of their sufferings.

'Rule X.—The slave may be mortgaged, demised, and settled for any particular estate or estates in possession, remainder, or reversion.' p. 84. Leasing out of the slaves.

Much stress is laid upon this as the cause of great injury to the slaves. Speaking of the leasing out of

negroes, Mr. S. says, 'I never saw in any of these 'leases covenants stipulating for adequate allow-'ances of food or other necessaries to the slaves, or 'for limiting their work in point of time or other-'wise, or for restraining excesses in punishment. 'I believe no leases can be produced with any such 'stipulations, though the lessors of course have 'counterparts and are almost always resident here. 'Such omissions are instructive.' p. 87. Of course the meaning of this last sentence is, they are 'in-'structive,' as shewing that no attention is paid to the preservation or protection of the slaves. In reply to this, it might be sufficient to observe, that as respects Jamaica, and I presume it is the same in the other islands, *the law* expressly regulates the allowances of food and time of labour, and guards against excess of punishment. It does not leave points of such vital importance to be regulated by contracts between individuals. But we have our author's own authority, that individuals take the most effectual means to ensure the observance of those regulations, and the proper treatment of their slaves. 'True it is,' says he 'the lessor generally endeavours 'to guard against such abuses, or rather to secure 'himself against loss, when they are practised, by 'what is called a *make good bargain,* namely, by a 'covenant from the lessor, to pay for any reduction 'in number and value of the slaves during the term, 'by appraisement; and for the performance of this 'covenant security is commonly required.' p. 86.

Now what is this but a stipulation for adequate

allowance of food and clothing, and every thing else necessary for life and well-being? What stronger tie can be devised than self-interest? If I hire another man's negroes for a certain period, under a stipulation to make good any deterioration that may take place in my employment, surely I will be careful for my own interest, putting humanity out of the question, to treat them properly; and as far as possible to guard against such a calamity. In point of fact I never knew hired negroes, that were not treated by the lessee precisely as his own: a man would be deservedly hooted, not only by the community, but by his own slaves, who should make a distinction in their treatment.

Provision markets of Jamaica supplied by the slaves.

'Where else,' asks Mr. Stephen, 'but in the 'British West Indies, did the subsistence of agri- 'cultural slaves depend on provisions to be bought 'or imported from abroad; consequently on the 'wealth, or the credit of their immediate master? 'and where else was he ever placed under so 'strong temptation or necessity to withhold from 'them a sufficiency of food?' p. 105.

It is true that the West India Islands have occasionally been visited with hurricanes, which in one hour have laid waste the cane fields and the provision grounds, and on such occasions there have been complaints of scarcity, as in other countries under similar circumstances. But does Mr. Stephen require to be told, that in Jamaica at least, the slaves do not, but on such happily rare occasions,

depend on provisions bought or imported? — that whether they are mortgaged or unmortgaged, they have land allotted them, and sufficient time allowed for its cultivation; that they are not only the growers of their own food, but the farmers who supply the masters of the country with provisions; that the city of Kingston, and every town and shipping place around the island, is supplied from the surplus of their cultivation; and that an advance on the price of edoes, yams, and plantains, is the cause of as much joy to them, as a rise in the price of sugar and rum to their masters, or of wheat to the English farmer?

The current price of plantains in the negro markets of St. Thomas in the East, for several years, has been three quarters of a dollar per hundred — about three shillings. Six of these serve a man for a day; consequently, he obtains what constitutes the staff of life, at three pence per day. Edoes and sweet potatoes are yet cheaper, being sold at half a dollar, or about two shillings the hundred, which is under the price of potatoes in this country; and yet we are told, that disposing of their surplus provisions at these prices, the negroes depend for subsistence upon provisions bought and imported from abroad, and that there exists a strong temptation or necessity on the part of their masters, to withhold from them a sufficiency of food!

The flour and rice imported into Jamaica, are regarded as luxuries, and no more as necessaries than

the rice of Carolina is in England. They are used chiefly by the whites, or served to the negroes when sick; but the latter are fond of them for a change, (as the whites are of plantains,) and buy them when cheap; and it is not unworthy of notice, that upon many of the estates a sort of business is made by some of the slaves of baking bread and selling to the others.*

Mortgage of a West India estate does not affect the slaves.

Whether a plantation is mortgaged or not, is a matter so little affecting in any way the comfort of the slaves, that they seldom know any thing about it; nay, the mortgage may be foreclosed, and the title deeds passed to the mortgagee, without their knowledge. That many estates are involved, and many for even more than they are worth in the present state of things, is but too true; but what does this amount to, only that the mortgagee is the real proprietor; a fact which many merchants in London at this moment feel to their cost. Does it follow that the slaves suffer from this? Facts do not bear out such a conclusion. The merchant who has his capital invested in a plantation, has too much at stake, and knows too well his own interest, to withhold what is required for their comfort and welfare. The extreme depreciation of West India produce for some years past, has made the strictest economy indispensable, but while every other description of

* They bake also a kind of sweet bread, or buns (the sugar costs nothing); and when a basket of these is brought into a house, all the little negro children are immediately about their master to be treated.

plantation stores from England has been yearly curtailed, the clothing and other necessaries for the negroes have been held strictly sacred.

Few of the proprietors are resident in the island; and as their attornies or representatives, who transmit annually to England lists of such supplies as are required, are in constant intercourse with the slaves, and by them looked up to as their protectors, it may be believed they will not feel disposed to make curtailments, more especially as they have no interest in doing so, and besides well know that the slaves, equally ignorant and indifferent whether their labour is or is not productive to their master, will be dissatisfied and discontented, if they find any of their accustomed allowances withheld.

It is due to the proprietors, and no less so to the mortgagees of Jamaica estates, to say, that however unproductive these may be to themselves, and they are miserably so at the present moment, they never do curtail the comforts of the slaves.

Of this truth, it is in the power of any one who wishes, to satisfy himself, by calling on any respectable West India house in London, and comparing the quantity of clothing, salt-provisions, rice, flour, medicines, &c. furnished in prosperous times and the present. How long it may be in their power to act in this way, and avert the apprehended crisis described by the Jamaica House of Assembly, when universal ruin shall overwhelm equally the master and his people, we shall not pretend to say; but most

certainly it will not be long, if public opinion is to be guided by misrepresentations, and the safer course of experience superseded by fallacious theories, applied by enthusiasts in England to a foreign community, of the state of which it is evident they are entirely ignorant.

Let any sincere philanthropist visit Jamaica, make himself acquainted with its institutions, with the condition and treatment of the labourers, in short, with slavery as it exists in practice; and then, if he can suggest how it is to be improved or ameliorated, consistently with the safety and welfare of the country, we shall not only be ready to listen to, but feel grateful for his suggestions; but when new and dangerous schemes and innovations founded upon ignorance and false assumptions, are recommended, 'we should,' as Mr. S. expresses it, 'commit actual suicide upon ourselves, were we to adopt them.'

Commercial character of sugar estates; how it affects the slaves.

In the chapter we are considering, and throughout the whole of the work, the commercial character of sugar estates is dwelt upon as an aggravation of West India slavery. 'In what other country,' asks Mr. Stephen, 'was the land and slaveholder, a ma-'nufacturer also?' p. 105.

Now is it not manifest, that the very circumstance of his being a manufacturer, promotes in a great measure the object contended for; an attachment of the slaves to the soil?—that in addition to the value of the land, the immense capital sunk in erecting

the buildings on a sugar estate, gives a double security to the labourers against a removal? If a planter were merely the cultivator of a raw article, and could regulate his fields, like a farmer in Europe, according to times and circumstances, he would be comparatively independent; but being a manufacturer as well as a farmer, and having a large capital sunk in his manufacturing establishment, he is compelled to persevere, however ruinous perseverance may be; for he cannot, like a farmer, change his crops; nor, like a manufacturer, discharge his workmen. Can it then be denied that the very circumstance of the planter being a manufacturer, as well as a farmer, while it makes him doubly the victim of times and circumstances over which he has no control, affords the best possible protection to his labourers, in attaching them to the soil, and thus securing to them the manifold comforts and blessings of a permanent domicile? Such in general is the situation of the majority of the slaves in the British colonies; they are by circumstances attached to the soil almost as firmly as they could be by law; but there are exceptions, and to make a positive statute attaching them to the soil, would in some instances be entailing misery alike on the master and slave.

That it is a serious evil to the planter to be compelled to mortgage his estate, is plain enough; but it is difficult to see how this can, as Mr. Stephen says, affect the slaves so seriously, as to endanger their very existence, considering, that by such deeds

they are almost universally attached to the land, and transferred along with it; and thus having their homes secured, care very little who holds the title deeds of the domain. In another part of his work, Mr. Stephen acknowledges this himself. Speaking of the hardships of slaves being sold under executions, he remarks that, 'if the interposition of mort-'gages did not, in the case of plantation negroes, 'very commonly bind them to the land, the misery 'here mentioned would be almost as general as the 'insolvency of the planter.' p. 74.

'RULE XI.—While the master's power of alienation is thus despotic and unlimited, the slave has no legal right of redeeming his liberty on any terms whatever; or of obtaining a change of masters, when cruel treatment makes it necessary for his relief or preservation.' p. 106. Enfranchisement for ill-treatment.

It is true, the slave has no 'legal right of redeem-'ing his liberty;' but the consolidated slave law of Jamaica of 1816, cap. 25. s. 25. empowers the courts of justice to enfranchise him, 'when cruel treatment 'makes it necessary for his relief or preservation;' and also provides him in such cases, an annuity of £10 per annum. Nor would it have been difficult for Mr. Stephen to have found records of such enfranchisement, had it suited his purpose. But this did not suit his purpose; and it is amusing to see with what ingenuity he argues, that the act of 1816, which extends the power of enfranchisement (formerly applicable only to cases of mutilation) to the smaller offences of cruelly beating, whipping, &c. gives no additional protection to the slaves!

Cases of such enfranchisement, it is true, are not of frequent occurrence; but the negroes are perfectly aware of the redress which the law affords them when cruelly treated; and there is no reason to doubt that appeals to it would be more frequent, were there cause for them. I was a juror some years ago on a trial of this kind, the report of which I shall give here—remarking by the way, that if those who have been led to believe that there is no proper feeling in the colonies, had witnessed the indignation at the conduct of the criminal, which prevailed in the court-house of Kingston that day, it would have satisfied them that Englishmen in Jamaica are not so different from Englishmen at home, or so callous to the ill-treatment of the negroes, as some persons are anxious to have believed.

'On Monday the 19th of January (1818,) in the Surrey Assize Court (Jamaica), Joseph Boyden was tried under the Slave Act, for cruelly, maliciously, and wantonly maltreating, by flogging and marking in different parts of the body, a Sambo slave, named Amey, his property, jointly with others.

"This indictment was brought by the justices and vestry of Port Royal against the traverser for the crime above noticed, and from what was given in evidence, it appeared that Amey had committed some transgression which induced her to apply to a neighbour, to intercede with her master for forgiveness, which he agreed to grant; but she was afterwards marked in five places with the initials of his name, and that of the property he owned. In consequence of conduct so contrary to every principle of humanity, and to the general treatment of slaves, she left her home, and sought redress from those empowered to grant it. The traverser was accordingly summoned before a board of magistrates, where he confessed having branded the female in question in two places, but disowned any other act of

cruelty committed on her, and there was no proof of flagellation. Amey was produced in court, and the brands examined. After hearing counsel on both sides, his honor the chief justice made a charge to the jury, characterizing the crime as one of a barbarous, savage, and horrible nature, and upon which but one conclusion could be formed. The jury, with little deliberation, returned a verdict of *guilty*.

'On the Friday succeeding his honor the Chief Justice passed the following sentence:—

'Joseph Boyden,—You have been tried and found guilty of maltreating a female slave, named Amey, the property of yourself and relations. The evidence in this case discloses in you a disposition at once so base and so ferocious, that the court despair of inducing any amendment in you, by any words they are capable of using. You can serve only as an example to deter others, if there be others like you in this country, from actions of similar atrocity. This at least may be fairly pronounced from this transaction, that whatever lawless and wanton severity is exercised towards a slave, the law is both ready and able to interpose for his protection. On her simple complaints, unsupported by other evidence, except that which your cruelty has, to your lasting shame, branded in indelible characters on her person, the Governor directed an inquiry to be made by the magistrates, who in consequence directed this prosecution. The sentence of the law is, that you the said Joseph Boyden, be and stand committed to the Common Gaol of the county of Surrey, there to remain, without bail or mainprize, for the space of six calendar months, to be computed from this 23rd January instant, and that at the expiration of such imprisonment you be discharged; and it is hereby declared, that the said Sambo woman slave, named Amey, is free, and discharged from all manner of servitude, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.—*Jamaica Royal Gazette.*

Other cases of the same kind might be added; but this will be sufficient to shew what truth there is in Mr. Stephen's canon, that 'the slave has no

'means of obtaining a change of masters when cruel 'treatment makes it necessary for his relief or pre-'servation.'

From Mr. Stephen's book, the reader will be led to believe that the whipping of negroes is a favourite pastime with English colonists,—a thing of daily, if not hourly occurrence, and the cutting off their ears and legs nearly as common! Unfortunately there was a time, when instances of such cruelty were occasionally heard of; there was also a time, when it was found necessary to make laws against the same enormity in England*; but had truth been any object with the learned gentleman, he would have better promoted its cause by informing his readers that mutilations or dismemberments, cutting off ears and legs, are now just as much unknown in the West Indies, as in England, and would be heard of with the same horror.

Magistrates may punish slaves for groundless complaints.

Great fault is found with the 28th section of the Jamaica slave law of 1816, by which it is provided that two justices of the peace may hear complaints of the slaves in cases of improper and prohibited punishments: 'and if it shall be found on enquiry 'that the complaint is true, it shall be the duty of 'the said magistrates, and they are hereby required 'to proceed against the offender according to law; 'but if it shall appear that such complaint was

* Coventry Act, 22 & 23 Car. II. c. 1. A shooting, stabbing, and maiming in Scotland bill, with a clause making the throwing oil of vitriol on a person a capital offence, was passed last session of parliament.

'groundless, the said magistrates shall punish the 'complainant, and the person giving information 'thereof, in such a manner as to them may seem 'proper.'

'What is meant,' says Mr. Stephen, 'by the pun-'ishing of a slave by magistrates, the same act will 'abundantly testify. The ordinary mode is a pub-'lic cart whipping; but the number of lashes here, 'contrary to the usual style of these meliorating 'acts, *is unrestrained.*' p. 113. And hence the reader is to infer, that although these magistrates are selected from the most respectable of the community, although they must feel themselves the protectors of the weak against the strong, and although, in hearing cases of this kind, they can be guided only by their judgment, uninfluenced by passion, yet such a power in the hands of such men, unrestrained, must be abused!

He goes on,—'The dilemma of the injured and 'complaining slave, therefore, is precisely this: if 'he fails in proving his charge, (which, as his own 'evidence and that of all the other slaves is excluded, 'is most likely to happen) he is to be cart-whipped 'by the justices; but if he proves it to their satis-'faction, he is to be cart-whipped by his master: 'for who can doubt that the same love of vengeance 'that ventured to transgress the law, will freely in-'dulge itself when safe within its limits?' p. 114.

A dreadful dilemma, truly! But let us see on what foundation it stands: 'The two most cruel,

'and destructive,' says Mr. S., 'and at the same 'time *most ordinary* modes of oppression in this sor- 'did commercial slavery, are excess of forced la- 'bour,' (by *the driver's whip*, as he has told us a thousand times) 'and insufficiency of food.' p. 112.

Now the presumption certainly is, that whichever of those *most ordinary* modes of oppression was complained of, the complainant must carry evidence in his person to establish the charge, without the testimony of his compeers or others.

Mr. Stephen himself, arguing against the magistrates being compelled to give up the name of an informer, when the accusation has been proved false, says, 'the production of the slave, if unmutilated 'and unmarked with the effects of any cruel treat- 'ment, would at once refute the charge and put an 'end to the proceeding.' p. 115.

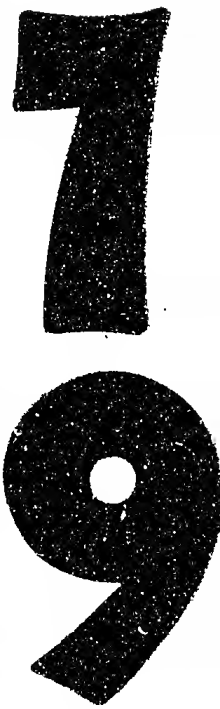
Checks and restraints on severity of punishment.

If the slave proves his charge, and gets redress, this, according to Mr. Stephen, but exposes him to the vengeance of an enraged master. To the minds of others, a more natural conclusion will be, that having found redress in one instance, he will be the more likely to complain again, if he has cause.

And granting that there may be instances (and they certainly are but few), where the master or the overseer is sufficiently cruel and unprincipled, to harbour a feeling of revenge against a slave who complains to the public authorities of ill-treatment, it would be very difficult, or rather absolutely im-

possible for him to indulge it. These are crimes that cannot be done in secret. On every plantation, besides the overseer, who alone exercises the highly responsible power of punishment, and who alone can therefore abuse it, there are other white persons, who not only will see, but speak, if there is any thing of this kind to speak of. Again, the hospital on every plantation is regularly visited by a physician, who has an opportunity of seeing every criminal under confinement, and will not be silent if he sees humanity outraged. The sequel need not be told; the damning facts will soon become public, and the result to the unfeeling perpetrator of such cruelty will be the sure loss of his situation, and what is worse, a loss of character never to be regained.

In the constitution of plantation management, there is another powerful check in restraining the severity of punishment. The overseer although the responsible and acting agent, is himself but second in authority, holding his situation at the pleasure of the proprietor, or attorney, who employs him. The negroes are aware that his orders must be obeyed in every thing just and reasonable; but if one newly put over them attempts any innovations on their comforts, or to exact more labour than has been customary, they have immediate recourse to their master, or 'Trustie,' as they call the attorney, whose ears are beset with complaints of every description.



But, says Mr. Stephen, the overseer's revenge

will make the poor wretches pay dearly for such conduct. They would laugh at such an idea; aware, that if the overseer were weak or wicked enough to act such a part, nothing would more effectually aid their views against him. What! for having complained? As certainly as punishment was inflicted on them for so doing, they would instantly return to their master or attorney to tell him of it, well knowing that such an act would be felt and resented, not only as an injury to them, but as a personal insult to himself.

Many deserving young men in the outset of life, by an over-zeal and over-strictness in the discharge of their duties, have thus raised against themselves the successful hostility of the negroes; who, not having the same feeling of emulation, or desire of approbation, to stimulate them out of their usual pace, will not be driven, and therefore naturally enough set themselves to oust their new overseer from his situation. For this purpose, besides teasing the master or attorney with complaints, they have various other means of hostility to a person who has made himself obnoxious to them, not to say by severity of treatment, but merely, perhaps, by a degree of vigilance or personal attention, beyond what they have been accustomed to. The canes are destroyed by the cattle, the cattle themselves are neglected, the sugar is spoiled in the manufactory, the mill is broken, thefts are committed, in short, every thing goes wrong. Thus annoyed with

their complaints to his employer, perhaps with desertions, and the many other means by which they can render him uncomfortable, and endanger his situation, the zealous overseer, if he does not immediately lose it, soon sees the impossibility of getting the negroes to work as he has seen the labourers at home work; and to secure not only his situation, but any comfort in it, is glad to allow them to go on quietly and peaceably in their own accustomed way.

Case of groundless complaint.

But as Mr. Stephen is not only highly displeased, that the magistrates are *unrestrained* in the punishment they may inflict, but that a slave should by law be subject to any punishment whatever for making groundless complaints; and as in a thing of this kind one may sometimes be better enabled to form a right judgment by facts, than by abstract reasoning; I shall here relate a circumstance which took place in November, 1823, in the parish of Portland, Jamaica, and to which I happened to be an eye-witness. The whole of the efficient negroes, (except, I believe, the tradesmen) amounting in number to between two and three hundred, left the Bog plantation, to which they belonged, and after being a week absent, nobody knew where, came in a body to the magistrates to make known their grievances, and obtain redress. A number of the justices, I think five, immediately convened in the court-house, to attend to them: although not inter-

ested, nor in authority, I also attended the investigation; and I can truly say, never did people receive a more patient hearing. Every individual who wished to speak was fully heard, and his or her evidence taken down in writing. The clamour was great, but upon their own shewing, when all they had to say was heard, their complaints were found to be without the shadow of foundation.

They thought it hard that they did not still receive some little extra gratuities and indulgences which their master, when himself in the country, had occasionally given to them. It was very properly answered to this, that, although their master might himself give them what he thought proper, his agent possessed no such discretionary power, and could only give them what were the customary allowances. One very loquacious individual complained, that he had, '*during his own time*,' (dinner hours and negro days,) with great labour brought home posts and made considerable progress in erecting a house for himself, which the overseer had very wantonly pulled down. This charge made a strong impression, which was, however, fully effaced when the truth came out, drawn from the complainant himself by cross-examination. It appeared that on the site he had chosen, there had been formerly a negro-house, which had been burned down; and, from its proximity to the mansion-house, had so seriously endangered it, that the negroes were forbidden to build there again. This the complainant

admitted he had known, but still insisted that he was greatly aggrieved. Some of the other complaints were, that they did not always get the quantity of nails they wanted out of their master's store, for building or repairing houses, hogsties, &c.; that, ten months ago, some of the Christmas codfish, which they considered exclusively for them, had been used by the Buckras; that when sick, they did not get so much rice, flour, &c. as they ought. To this last charge a respectable medical gentleman present made answer, that he attended the property, and was bound to say, that in a very extensive practice he did not know another hospital so amply, liberally, and generously supplied with every comfort for the sick. But the principal grievance which appeared to have influenced their present conduct was, that they had not the previous week received their accustomed allowance of herrings (an article valued merely as a seasoning for their vegetable food), although it had been explained to them that there were none on the property; but that a ship (the Alfred) was daily expected from Glasgow with a supply; and that in the meantime, if a few barrels could be procured for them at Port Antonio, it would be done. This fact was proved by a gentleman present, who said the attorney of the estate applied to him for ten barrels of fish; and requested, if he had none himself, that he would make enquiry if they could be procured from any other person in the quarter: but there was none to be got. The

magistrates enquired if they had any complaint to make of severity of punishment to justify their highly improper conduct; but of the 'two most 'ordinary modes of oppression,' flagellation and hunger, there was not among all these complaints even a pretence; and if there had, their appearance would certainly have belied the charge; for I much doubt, if any little village in England, of the same population, could have turned out such a proportion of fine looking healthy people.

Now, will Mr. Stephen say, or will any man in England say, that there should be no restraint by law upon such conduct as this?—that negroes should be permitted to leave their homes for any or no cause, under pretence of complaining to magistrates? If so, it would surely be their own fault if they did not avail themselves of the privilege as often as they felt inclined for a day's or a few days' idleness.

It should be considered too, that by such conduct on the part of the slaves as is above related, the public peace is greatly endangered; that in England, if labourers neglect their work they injure *themselves;* but here, where they are provided for in health and in sickness, in labour and in idleness, their masters have no hold of them by self-interest, consequently there is the greater necessity that the law should restrain and punish neglect of duty upon such groundless pretences.

In the case I have stated, the labour of nearly three hundred people was lost for several days to

the person who supports them; and, moreover, his sugar manufactory being at work at the time they left their duty, he lost a quantity of canes, which were cut in the field, and had soured and become useless before they returned. Yet, when the whole of their complaints had been heard, and proved so entirely groundless, they were ordered back to their duty with merely an admonition to conduct themselves better in time to come. That the magistrates did wrong in acting with such lenity, I do not say; I contend only for the necessity of the law arming the magistrates with power to check such outrages, and punish those who desert their duty on such groundless pretences.

'RULE XII.—The state of slavery is hereditary and perpetual.' p. 122. Slavery hereditary.

We have, in our author's comments upon this rule, a specimen of that 'metaphysical subtlety in the 'science of pleading,' in which he feels a professional pride, and by which, coupled with the presumption in favour, of freedom, he tells us, 'a *villein* 'in England, who asserted his freedom at law, had 'multiplied chances of success, *independently of the* '*merits of the case.*' p. 387.

He seems, in the outset, to forget that he is delineating the state of slavery in the British West Indies 'as it exists *in point of law;*' for after laying down the canon above quoted, that the state of slavery is hereditary and perpetual, he says in the next page,

'I shall have credit, I trust, for the assertion founded on my certain knowledge as to many of the islands, and my full belief as to all, that no positive law has any where expressly imposed slavery in the issue of negroes born under the king's allegiance, though their mothers, or even both the parents, should be slaves.' Of course, the conclusion from this is (contrary to the canon), that this slavery is not hereditary. He does not rest here, however; but proceeds to establish, agreeably to the canon, that it is hereditary according to the custom and usages of all ages and countries. 'The perpetuity and hereditary nature of this sad state of man,' says he, 'may be considered by our colonists perhaps,' and others also, 'as universal qualities of slavery, and as involved in the very meaning of the term.* They certainly did belong to the slavery of ancient Europe. The vassalage of Africa is hereditary, and perhaps perpetual.' p. 125. 'By the law of villeinage in England, the issue of slaves followed the condition of their father.' p. 123.

These premises lead back to the conclusion, that slavery has ever been hereditary and perpetual; but this conclusion must be again denied, or at least not allowed to be a precedent sufficient to excuse or justify the same feature in the slavery of the British West Indies; where, with consistent inconsistency,

* Denique et id *passim* receptum, ut quæ ex servis parentibus nascitur proles, servilis et ipsa sit conditionis, pertineatque tanquam mancipium ad dominum matris.—*Puffendorf de Officio Hominis et Civis*, lib. ii. cap. 4.

belying his own canon, he denies that it is the law, and modestly sets up his own opinion, not only in opposition to the ancient customs and usages he has quoted, but in opposition to the decision of the modern courts, 'which,' it seems, 'have mis-'taken the cruel wrong for right.'

'He (the planter),' says he, 'buys a life interest 'in bondage, under one law, and converts it into an 'inheritance by another; unless we ought rather to 'say, that he makes this injurious conversion with-'out any law whatever. He can plead only that 'his brother planters, and their predecessors, have 'been used to inflict the same cruel wrong, and that 'the courts have mistaken it for right.' p. 126. But the planter may go farther, and plead the authority of Mr. Stephen's own act for the general Registration of slaves in 1815, which expressly recognises the property in slaves and their offspring. How strange, that ancient 'customs and usages, modern 'courts,' and eminent writers (including our author himself), should all have 'mistaken the cruel wrong for right,' in supposing that the master held a right of property in the offspring of a purchased slave!

It would have been kind if Mr. Stephen had stated the law under which the colonists hold 'a life 'interest' in their slaves, that his readers might have judged for themselves what this 'injurious conver-'sion' is. The truth is, as he well knows, there exists no such law.

The state of villeinage was virtually acknowledged

in England by laws for its regulation, and so has the slavery of the colonies; but has Mr. Stephen in his researches found an English statute establishing this state of oppression, and enacting that from and after the passing thereof, one part of the people and their *offspring* shall, as villeins or slaves, be held as the lawful property of the other? If he can invalidate the claim of the colonists to the issue of their slaves, on the plea that there is no statute law giving a right to them, it should have required but little 'metaphysical subtlety' in the lawyers of former times, to effect the enfranchisement of the villeins of England, since he will admit, we suppose, that no statute can be found entailing the state of villeinage on the offspring of villeins.*

* On this subject a few sentences from the judgment lately pronounced by the venerable lord Stowell, in the case of the slave Graco, 6th of November, 1827, may be quoted:

'Ancient custom is generally recognised as a just foundation of all law—villeinage 'of both kinds, which is said by some to be the prototype of slavery, had no other 'origin than ancient custom; a great part of the common law itself, in all its 'relations, has little other foundation than the same *custom;* and the practice of 'slavery, as it exists in Antigua and several other of our colonies, though regulated 'by law, has been in many instances founded upon a similar authority.

'Reference has been made to an act of that colony, in which it is declared that 'they acknowledge no other law than the common law of England, so far as it 'stands unaltered by any written law of that island, or by some act of parliament. 'Now this enumeration of their laws omitted a very material source from whence 'other laws were derived—that of legitimate custom; and if that could not be 'deemed a venial omission, it surely would be a gross abusing of all principle to 'say that upon that account they should be deprived of their commerce, which every 'other island in that Archipelago had uniformly possessed, and which the sovereign 'state had promoted and encouraged in all of them. It might not have occurred to 'the gentlemen of that island to insist upon custom, so protected, to be a source of 'laws; and an omission of this kind, in describing the sources of law, can never 'have the effect of disabling that efficacy which has not only been exercised both 'before and since the passing of that decree, but has since been guaranteed and 'protected to the utmost by the laws of the mother country, in common with the 'state of the other islands in the same part of the world.

Speaking of slavery as hereditary, Mr. Stephen says, 'They are slaves to the latest posterity; except that the female descendants may, at the price of pollution, and by submitting to the lusts of their oppressors for three generations, restore freedom to a portion of the fourth.' p. 128.—'A female slave marrying,' or breeding by a 'negro or a mulatto, attaches slavery on her offspring; but let her breed by a white keeper, and they, if she be a mestize, will be free: if she be a mulatto, or negro, her daughter or grand-daughter will have the same reward for prostitution. From what legal authority these canons of slavery are derived, the colonial proprietors have never, I believe, attempted to explain.' p. 122.

This is given as the law of Jamaica, but no authority is quoted; nor is it said where these canons

---

'Slavery was a very favoured introduction into the colonies; it was deemed a great source of the mercantile interest of the country, and was on that account largely considered by the mother country, as a great source of its wealth and strength. Treaties were made on that account, and the colonies compelled to submit to those treaties by the authority of this country.

'The time may come when this institution may fall as other institutions have done in other flourishing countries; but I am of opinion that it can only be effected at the joint expence of both countries; for it is in a peculiar measure the crime of this country, and I rather feel it to be an objection to this species of emancipation (a slave's having been in England), that it is intended to be a very cheap measure here, by throwing the whole expence upon the colony.

'It is most certain that this trade of the colonies has been the very favourite trade of this country, so far as can be judged of encouragement given in various forms—the making of treaties, the institution of companies, the devolution from one company to another, the compulsion of the colonies to accept this traffic, and the recognition of it in a great variety of its laws. If it be a sin, it is a sin in which this country has its full share of the guilt, and ought to bear its proportion of its redemption. How this country can decline to perform *the act of justice* in *performing the act of charity*, men of great wisdom and integrity have not been able to discover.'

(the derivation of which we are called upon to explain) are to be found. The writer of these remarks is not aware that any such exist: most likely the error has originated in the circumstance, that people of the above description, when freed by the regular course of manumission, enjoy all the privileges of white persons (from whom they are undistinguishable in colour), which the negroes do not: and, had the law given freedom to a class of people, with one-sixteenth of African, and fifteen-sixteenths of English blood, few will perhaps think that the distinction would have merited the contempt implied in Mr. Stephen's expressions: at all events, he ought to have ascertained that such canons of slavery really existed, before he reproached the colonists with them, and called for an explanation of the legal origin from which they were derived.

'Submitting to the lusts of their oppressors,' and 'breeding by a white keeper,' are well chosen terms for the English reader, who is not aware that there are not, or rather that there were not till lately, any regular marriages known among the black or coloured people; and that husband and keeper were considered synonymous terms. Of course there was no degradation to the female, but the contrary, in this sort of marriage, as she regarded it, with a white man.

With the progress of religious and general education among the free people of colour, marriages are becoming more frequent. As regards the past, the candid will admit, that it has not been the least

misfortune of Europeans, toiling for a subsistence in these dangerous climates, that the blessings of marriage and domestic happiness have in a great measure been denied them.

'CHAPTER IV.—Of the legal nature and incidents of colonial slavery, as they respect its relations to persons of free condition in general, the master and his delegates excepted.' p. 129. Intercourse of the Slaves with free persons.

The merits of this chapter will be more briefly discussed, as, besides turning on dry legal questions of little importance as regards the practical state of slavery, it was written so long ago as before the abolition, and contains very little applicable to the state of things now existing in the colonies. The first page will afford a pretty fair specimen of the sophistry of the whole chapter.

'The enslaved peasant, attached to an extensive domain, as in Russia or Poland, may find his legal relations to free persons in general, of little moment to his security or welfare. To him the lord, the family and the agents of the lord, and his brother bondmen, constitute for every important purpose, the whole community; for as it is with them alone that he has any ordinary intercourse, from their hands only, can he often receive either good or evil. Such must have been generally the case with all territorial slaves in ancient Europe; and probably is so in every country in which such men are still to be found, *except in the western world.*' p. 129.

That such ever has been, and ever must be, the state of slavery, is such a plain and self-evident proposition, that one's curiosity is excited to learn how the slavery in the western world can afford an exception to it. It is thus established:—

'But the plantation negro, in our colonies, is exposed to daily in-

tercourse with free persons, who are wholly unconnected with the owner to whom he belongs. He cannot attend the team to a town or shipping place, go to the market, or neighbouring rivulet, or pass on any occasion beyond the boundaries of the estate, without meeting white persons, who possess, in regard to him, neither the rights nor feelings of a master.' p. 129.

True; but what harm will it do him to meet a white person, who has neither the feelings *nor the rights* of a master? Were Mr. S., or any of his friends, the Edinburgh Reviewers, to presume to injure, or maltreat another man's slave in Jamaica, when attending his team to the shipping port, I will answer for it, he would soon learn that the slaves there are not to be so treated with impunity.

It is strange the Russian or Polish slaves should not have occasion to go beyond the limits of their master's domain, and that 'such must have been 'the case with all territorial slaves in ancient 'Europe;' but whatever truth may be in this, certainly there never were bondmen of whom it might be more truly said, than of the slave in the West Indies, that 'to him the lord, the family and the 'agents of the lord, and his brother bondmen, con-'stitute for every important purpose, the whole 'community.'

On the legal protection of the Slave.

'Section II.—The colonial slave cannot be a party to any civil suit, either as plaintiff or defendant; nor can he be received as informant or prosecutor by any court or magistrate, against a person of free condition.' p. 131.

But, answers Mr. Stephen,—

'There are two possible modes, by which men in the defenceless

condition which has been described, may be supposed indirectly to derive some legal protection, and in which it has been pretended that they actually are protected by the laws of our colonies, against the oppression of strangers, notwithstanding their civil incapacities: they are, first, by the action or suit of the master; second, by indictment, or other prosecution, at the suit of the crown.' p. 132.

'SECTION III.—The action or suit of the master against other persons of free condition by whom his slave has been injured, is a mode of redress applicable only to a particular species of wrongs, and is improperly represented as legal protection to the slave.' p. 133.

'But,' continues Mr. Stephen, 'the interest which a master has in the labour of his servant, or apprentice, is an interest which the law of England recognizes, and therefore it gives an action to the former, for any hurt unlawfully done to the person of the latter, whereby his service is interrupted or lost. On the same principle it has rightly been considered as law in the West Indies; and in a few extreme cases' (qualified as usual) 'has been practically received and acted upon as such, by the insular courts, that the master of a negro slave may maintain an action against any man, who, without his authority, beats or wounds a slave so severely, as to occasion a loss of his service.' p. 134.

The question in the minds of all dispassionate men is, whether the slaves actually are protected from injury: the mode or the manner in which this is effected is of secondary consequence, whether by suits in their own name, or in the name of their masters.

Speaking of the infringement of a slave's property, Mr. S. thus expresses himself: 'There is one species of injury, for which I admit that an adequate remedy might be found in the master's right of action, were it not for certain general impediments

'to the course of justice in the colonies, which will 'soon claim our attention.* 'If a negro (says the 'council and assembly of St. Christopher) is de- 'prived of his property (*which in legal consideration 'is the property of the master*), by another negro, or 'by a free person, the master of such a negro has 'the same legal remedies for the recovery of it, as 'he has for his own immediate property. This an- 'swer, though evasive and disingenuous, is true.' p. 139.

The same remark applies here as in the former case. It is of secondary importance by what means the property of the slave is protected; if in point of fact, as here admitted, it is so. The law, it is true, puts in his own hands no legal means of protecting his property, yet it is protected: the law does not recognise him as the possessor of property, yet he does possess it.

The question is thought by many to be attended with difficulties; but, for my own part, I can see no sufficient reason why those who *de facto* are allowed to possess property, and are never disturbed in the possession of it, should not be entitled by law to possess it.

When a slave purchases a horse, he takes the bill of parcels in the name of some free relative or acquaintance, that if his horse should happen to go astray and be put in a pound, he may be able to reclaim him. Their titles to slaves are held in the

* Every admission by our author of any protection to the slave, is accompanied by such guarded qualifications as may make it, if possible, appear of no avail.

same manner. In their dealings with one another, when a slave, as sometimes happens, cannot obtain payment of a debt due to him by another slave, he applies to his master or overseer, who gives him a letter to the master or overseer of the other slave, stating the particulars of the claim, and requesting an investigation and settlement of it, if found correct. Applications of this kind always receive every possible attention; and in this way their differences are usually settled. In the same manner the master or overseer will attend to the slave's claim against free persons; as, on the other hand, these apply to his master or overseer, when they have any claim on a slave which they cannot otherwise get settled.

Mr. Stephen complains, that 'slaves cannot contract, or be contracted with: that a promissory note or bond made to a negro slave, would just have as much legal effect in the colonies, as if the payee or obligee were a horse or a spaniel,' p. 140; and challenges us 'to produce the record of a single action founded on the contract of a slave, from any court in the West Indies.' p. 141.

But what injury have the negroes sustained from this? *Not yet taught to read and write,* and having no faith in *paper*, they very wisely give little credit, and deal principally in doubloons and dollars. Such, indeed, is their predilection for the precious metals, that even the island treasury note they will on no account receive. Records of actions, therefore, founded on the contracts of slaves, or their promissory notes, can scarcely be expected.

'SECTION IV.—The legal protection of the slave against strangers by indictment, or other prosecutions at the suit of the crown, is also of a very narrow extent.' p. 142.

There is little worth noticing under this head. Numerous references are made to old obsolete laws in the Leeward Islands, and evidence founded thereon, of which Mr. Stephen has been prudent in not giving the dates. It is evident, as he acknowledges indeed, that this legal matter was composed long ago. To suit the present times, however, it was necessary to say something of the late consolidated slave law of Jamaica, (that of 1816) which has come unseasonably in the way, and given a marked incongruity to his whole fabric of assertions and arguments.

'Even the meliorating acts,' says he, 'which have since been passed in several islands, will be found in general not to hold out to them (the slaves) any protection against strangers of free condition, except in the few special cases in which it is *affected* to be given against the master himself. They relate in general only to one species of injury, that of violence to the person; and so far are the new acts from making all injuries even of this kind, indictable, that they plainly imply the contrary; since the greater part of them prohibit it only by special and aggravatory descriptions, such as *wanton and cruel* beating, wounding, &c.' p. 148.

Now if a stranger of free condition offers an injury, however slight, to a slave, over whom he has no authority, and with whom he has no connection, there surely would be little difficulty in proving it to have been 'wanton and cruel:' but in point of fact, there is so little connection, so little interest in common, between the slaves and persons of free condition, that this an evil of rare occurrence. Even if the law afforded no protection, free people of the

lower class, who are alone likely to have quarrels with the slaves, and to do them an injury, are afraid of the master's power of retribution. However specious in appearance, nothing can be more unsound in practice than to take the laws of England, as a test by which to judge of those made for a society so differently constituted.

Adultery with the wife of a slave.

SECTION V. — There are many species of wrongs, for which it is not pretended that a slave, when injured, by a free stranger, can have any legal redress.' p. 156.

Of these many wrongs, Mr. Stephen particularly enlarges on one, the case of adultery with the wife of a slave; and the proof by which he establishes this most foul and unfounded charge against the colonists, is a gross perversion of the evidence of Chief Justice Ottley, of St. Vincent, examined before the House of Commons, thirty-three years ago.

'One of the best informed, and by far the most candid of the witnesses connected with, or resident in the colonies, Chief Justice Ottley, of St. Vincent, was asked, 'Is the slave often married or attached to one woman as his wife?' He answered, 'In St. Vincent, the slave is never married according to the rites of the church; but they are very frequently attached to one woman.' It was enquired, 'If so attached, is that woman or wife liable to be taken, or debauched from him by a white person, and do such cases happen?' He replied, 'I know of no law to prevent it, but I do not recollect cases of the kind ever happening: they may have happened without my knowledge.' p. 161.

Now, what is the candid Mr. Stephen's comment upon this?—

'Certainly they might have happened to any extent without his *judicial* knowledge, for the reason he himself assigns. p. 161.

Does Mr. Ottley's evidence bear such a construction, or the insidious distinction here drawn between his general and his judicial knowledge, when his previous answers are evidently founded on his general, and not his judicial knowledge? But, in the estimation of Mr. Stephen, such a trifling perversion to serve the good cause, may be regarded as pardonable, if not meritorious. It certainly is a venial offence, compared with the unfounded calumny he is guilty of in asserting, *that the connubial rights of these poor men are every where violated by the white people.* p. 161.

To this, and many other charges brought against the colonists, it is impossible to answer better than in our author's own words, when speaking of some aspersion on his own character: 'To the wretches 'who have had the malignity to invent such a charge, 'reproof would be useless: to those who have adopted it, I say, look well to and cleanse your own 'hearts, for there must have been foul corruption in 'them before you could credit the accusation.' *pref.* p. 66.

Even this accusation is not enough; the colonists must be represented as wretches so hardened in wickedness, as not even to know or think that they are doing wrong; for such is the import of the following paragraph: —

'West Indians, I am aware, will think, that in noticing this case as one of the defects in their slave laws, I am taking an unfair advantage of the prejudices of European readers. But, by *their leaves*, *I* must regard the voluntary and exclusive cohabitation of one man

with one woman, where neither law nor custom has provided any nuptial solemnity, as constituting a marriage union, which it is by the law of God adultery to violate, and which the law of man ought in justice to protect.

That this crime may not have been perpetrated in the West Indies, as well as in Westminster, I cannot take upon me to say; but if so, it is concealed; and I feel justified in saying, so great is the abhorrence with which it is regarded in Jamaica, that such a charge established against a white person on a plantation, whether overseer or book-keeper, would be the loss of his situation and character. Nor is this, as Mr. S.'s assertions may lead one to suppose, a new feeling there. Twenty years ago I heard the late Mr. Simon Taylor, the wealthiest and most influential man in these islands, say, that he would discharge from his employ any man, however much regard he might otherwise entertain for him, who should be guilty of this act.

That concubinage is customary in the West Indies, cannot be denied, but there are objects enough there for the licentious, as in other places, without trespassing on the connubial rights of the most humble.

Mr. Stephen's aim being to work on the prejudices of the British public, and fan the flame against the colonists, he evidently considers any means allowable; and the truth or falsehood of his charges of no moment. Having already made them such monsters for cruelty, injustice, and oppression, he is at least consistent in adding adultery to the catalogue of their crimes.

Marriage of slaves.

That the exclusive cohabitation of one man with one woman, where neither law nor custom has provided any nuptial solemnity, is a marriage union, which ought to be held sacred, need not be told even to savages; but as to legal enactments to give permanency to such unions among the negroes, all I shall say, is, that I fear Mr. Stephen will not easily persuade an African, who has been accustomed and claims a right to follow his own free will in these matters, to submit to such restraints. No obstacle, certainly, is ever put in the way of regular marriages among the slaves; on the contrary it is the wish, and the interest, of their owners to promote them: but all sensible people are agreed, that it would be in vain to attempt by law to reform the evil, till they are further advanced in the scale of civilized life.*

A negro fully acknowledges the authority of his master in regard to his labour: but boldly disclaims his right to controul or interfere with his inclination and free will in matrimonial connections; and any attempt to direct him in these particulars has always been found to produce an opposite effect. Many instances of this have come within my own knowledge. The most unavailing exercise of authority as a mas-

* Among Mr. Buxton's suggested improvements on the condition of the slaves, I find it proposed, 'that marriage should be ENFORCED.'—*Debate in the House of Commons, 15th May*, 1823.

If it would be so good a thing for the negroes, why should not the people at home have the benefit of marriage being *enforced among them?* In returning late from the House, the benevolent member for Weymouth must often have seen with sorrow, such gross pollution as has no parallel in the West Indies, although among a people, who (Mr. Stephen tells us) are '*individually*, as well as *collectively*, *publicly* as well as *privately* instructed.' Might he not extend his benevolence to his own countrymen, by introducing a law to *enforce* marriage in London and Westminster?

ter, that I ever myself made, was in a case of this kind. A woman who had long been the wife of a very deserving man, and had borne five children to him, some of them yet very young, became attached to another, and left him. The husband first made his suspicions known to me, and complained of the injury done to him and his children. I could scarcely at first believe it, but privately cautioned the parties (who denied the charge) of the consequences, if it should prove true. On further complaint being made, I again admonished them, threatened, and ultimately punished, but to no purpose; and though I have since, on similar occasions, pressed well-meant but unavailing advice, I have never done more. The solemnization of regular marriages among the better informed negroes, with the progress of religion, is gradually effecting the removal of this great evil, to the advantage as much of the master, as of the slave; two interests which, in this case, as in many others, happily go together.

Defamation of slaves.

In the conclusion of this section, Mr. S. enumerates various other 'remediless wrongs,' to which he says the slave is exposed:—'He *may* be the victim 'of the most cruel defamation, *may* be arrested and 'imprisoned without any justifiable cause, *may* be 'prosecuted maliciously, and have his life brought 'into danger, by the most groundless accusations, 'and, in short, with the exceptions already noticed, '*may* sustain all the oppression which the injustice

'and malignity of the wicked, can inflict upon the 'innocent.' p. 166.

The dispassionate reader will perhaps ask, whether these supposed cases of oppression *may* not all occur in free and happy England? Nay, whether some of them are not of daily occurrence there, though not among the labouring classes, who have a sufficient lot of physical evil to bear in all countries, but run little risk of being 'cruely defamed, unjus-'tifiably arrested, or maliciously prosecuted.'

Had Mr. Stephen been less anxious to impute to the white people in the British colonies *every* depravity to be found in the catalogue of crimes (including universal adultery among the rest), and to make the slaves the victims of *every* species of wrong and suffering that flesh is heir to, in civilized as well as barbarous life, he would have recollected that 'to be 'cruelly defamed, maliciously prosecuted, and to have 'their lives brought into danger by the most groundless accusations,' was the portion, not of the slaves, but *of their masters;* and an evil from some degree of which, it would appear from his preface, that even *he* and his son have not been entirely exempted.

Evidence of slaves.

'SECTION VI.—The testimony of slaves is not admissible in any cause, civil or criminal, against a white person, though this confessedly suffices to deprive them of the benefit of the laws by which they are in a few cases ostensibly protected, independently of all other obstacles to the execution of such laws.' p. 166.

The inadmissibility of the evidence of slaves has been long felt and acknowledged to be a great evil in the colonies, but an evil hitherto considered irre-

mediable. From the improvement, however, now making on the religious and moral character of a large proportion of the slaves, the grounds upon which the rejection of their evidence stood, are fast giving way; and an opinion now prevails among many of the most intelligent colonists, that this defect in the laws may to some extent be remedied, by admitting slave evidence, under certain regulations, against free persons.

While not at issue therefore with Mr. Stephen, on this important question, I cannot help noticing his want of candour here as on other occasions. Who else does not see the objections there existed to the testimony of barbarous pagans, incapable of comprehending the nature of an oath, ignorant of the sanctions that restrain Christians from false swearing, and insensible to the infamy or loss of character that attends it? 'Whatever we may imagine,' says Hume, 'concerning the usual truth and sincerity of 'men who live in a rude and barbarous state, there 'is much more falsehood and even perjury among 'them, than among civilized nations.' Yet he is not speaking here of the savage hordes of Africa, the Ashantees or Coromantees,* but of our own ances-

* The Asbantees are known from recent events, and the Coromantees equally well to persons versant in the history of Jamaica, from the atrocities committed by them in the insurrection of 1760.

'At Ballard's valley, they surrounded the overseer's house about four in the 'morning, in which, finding all the white servants in bed, they butchered every one 'of them in the most savage manner, and literally drank their blood mixed with 'rum. At Esber, and other estates, they exhibited the same tragedy, and then set 'fire to the buildings and canes. In one morning they murdered between thirty and 'forty whites and mulattoes, not sparing even infants at the breasts.'—*B. Edwards, vol. II. p.78.*

tors, after they were converted to Christianity. Surely, when these circumstances are considered, Christian charity, 'which thinketh no evil,' might ascribe the rejection of negro evidence to something else than 'that universal hatred and contempt of the 'oppressor towards the oppressed, which manifests 'itself in the colonies by an abomination of the 'African colour and lineage; coupled with a desire 'to screen offenders of the privileged order from dis-'creditable prosecutions, as well as from the danger 'of public punishment and disgrace.' p. 185. Or, as in another place, to 'that contemptuous antipathy 'to the African race, and a determination that the 'crimes of white oppressors shall pass unpunished.' p. 182.

Even yet the admission of their evidence is attended with considerable difficulty. Mr. Stephen himself admits, that there would be danger in receiving the testimony of a slave wherever the master has any interest in the cause; and suggests that 'they ought never, perhaps, to be heard, but when 'he is himself no party, and would, if called as a 'witness, be free from every exception.' p. 177. But the danger does not stop there; for, from the ignorance and abject condition of the slaves, too many of them would be ready instruments in the hands of any unprincipled person.* This, however,

* A very common idea among the African negroes is, that false swearing will bring some bodily calamity upon them; ('*make them belly swell,*' as they express it), but that their having a broken rial in their mouth, when giving evidence, will act as a charm to prevent this.

it may be hoped, will not long be the case; and I notice these difficulties only to shew there are other causes for not having as yet made their testimony admissible, than those to which Mr. Stephen's charity imputes it.

If it will afford him any satisfaction, however, I think I can assure him, that I speak not only my own individual sentiments, but those of a great proportion of the white people in Jamaica, when I say that we shall now be happy, how soon our legislature shall make slave testimony admissible in the courts, in such manner that while the innocent are protected, the guilty may be brought to punishment, whether white-skinned or black. But should our Assembly, in the exercise of that highly responsible trust, which we repose in its hands with the confidence its conduct has ever merited, deem the minds of the slaves not yet sufficiently enlightened to be safely trusted as evidence against the white people, their masters, let it not be thought that this is denied them for the purpose of screening the guilty from the punishment of their crimes. During a residence of upwards of twenty years in Jamaica, I have not known an instance where a white person has escaped punishment from the inability of slaves to give evidence against him. This fact, however, while it leads to the conclusion that little injury has been done to the slaves, by not admitting their evidence against white persons, goes in some measure also to prove that no evil could result to the latter from granting it; and such I confess is my impression.

Cases I have certainly known of quarrels between slaves and free persons of colour, where the former had no possible means of obtaining a fair hearing in their own defence from the inadmissibility of their evidence. This surely is wrong; and as the number of free persons of colour is fast increasing, the chance of wrong to the slave encreases in the same proportion; while his progressive wealth and intelligence render such rejection of his testimony the more intolerable.

Mr. Stephen ridicules the idea of admitting the evidence of slaves against free persons of their own colour, and not also against white persons. This he calls, 'holding the credibility of evidence to 'depend on the colour of the defendant against whom 'it is given, that white criminals may escape, and 'blacks and mulattoes be hanged unjustly.' p. 183. But this distinction, though I do not mean to argue in favour of it, is not quite so ridiculous as he would make it appear. It is by those more immediately on a footing with themselves, and with whom they are coming in daily contact, that slaves are most likely to be injured, and against whom it is therefore most important that they should have protection. The admission of their evidence against white persons is of much less consequence; both because they are less likely to be injured by them, and because, as before stated, the great body of plantation slaves are under the immediate authority of agents who are themselves dependent, and from whose violence or ill treatment the slaves are protected.

by a more summary process than a court of law, an appeal to their master, or those in superior authority to the offender.

It is also a grievance complained of by Mr. S. that free negroes and mulattoes are not tried *per pares;* but whatever contemptuous opinion *he* may entertain of the white people in the colonies, it is well known that the coloured population in general think they have a better chance of justice from a jury of intelligent white men, uninfluenced by any of the little animosities and jealousies which exist among themselves, than they would have from a negro or mulatto jury. It is true, free persons of colour have petitioned the legislature for an equality of privileges with the white people, and among others to sit as jurors; but this may be considered as the wish of a few of the more wealthy, who look forward to sit as judges, rather than of the many who are to be judged.

It has been suggested that to entitle slaves to give evidence against free persons, and to guard in some measure against the dangers apprehended, such only should be admitted, as had obtained a certificate from the clergyman of the parish of their general good character, and their sufficiently comprehending the nature of an oath. But to such a rule there are many objections; it would be likely to create much dissatisfaction, and hurt the clergyman's usefulness; besides that it would be very difficult for a clergyman to become sufficiently acquainted with the character of every slave in his parish, so as to be

able to say whether he would or would not be a credible witness; nor would such a power in his hands be altogether free from objection. Allowing the court itself on examination to decide as to competency of knowledge, with perhaps some testimony as to character, would be better.

I was once present when two old African negroes belonging to Cheswick estate, and with whom I happened to be well acquainted, came to the clergyman of the parish desiring baptism. On examining them as to their knowledge of Christianity, one of them, an indifferent character, gave such answers as were considered satisfactory, and was baptized; the other, a very good character, but less apt, was rejected; and on turning indignantly away, exclaimed, 'It hurts me to be treated so, when that 'worthless runaway and thief is made a Christian, 'and Buckra always known me to be a good 'nigger.'

Slave's right of self-defence.

'SECTION VII.—The slave, while exposed to so many remediless wrongs, is bereft by the same laws of the right of self-defence.' p. 187.—By the existing law in most, I believe in all our colonies, the slave who should attempt to defend himself against a murderous weapon, or instrument of torture, in the hands of a white person, though the aggressor possessed no public warrant, or private authority over him, might be hanged for so obeying the imperious dictates of nature.' p. 190.

The following clause of the slave act is the sole ground upon which this unparalleled charge rests; and I beg the reader to remark upon how slight a

foundation our author's ingenuity has been able to build so hideous an accusation.

'And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any slave *shall assault, or offer any violence,* by striking, or otherwise, to, or towards any white person, or persons of free condition, such slave, upon due and proper proof, shall, upon conviction, be punished with death, transportation, or confinement to hard labour for life, or a limited time, or such other punishment, according to the nature of the offence, as the court shall in their discretion think proper to inflict; provided such assault or violence be not by command of his, her, or their owners, overseers, or persons entrusted with them, or in the lawful defence of their owners' persons, or goods.'

The question here evidently is not about a white or free person assaulting a slave, but about a slave assaulting or offering violence to a white or free person. The words '*assault, or offer violence,*' clearly imply the slave's being the aggressor, and the clause has no reference to the slave's right of self-defence in the case of his being assaulted or offered violence to. But because a slave is so much under the power and influence of his master and his agents, he ought not to suffer punishment for what he does at their command, or in the lawful defence of the owner's person, or goods; and the law provides accordingly.

Now what is there in this to take away the slave's right of self-defence, when it is not *he* that assaults or offers violence to a white or free person, (the case alone that the clause of the act is providing for) but a white or free person that assaults or offers violence to him? Oh, says Mr. Stephen (for such is his meaning in printing *owner's* person in italics),

it should also have been added, or in the lawful defence of his (the slave's) own person. — Why? The question was not about the slave's right of self-defence, when assaulted; but what should be his punishment when he assaults, and what should excuse him for assaulting or offering violence. But because it is not here expressly enacted that a slave, when assaulted or offered violence to, may defend himself (as to which no one could entertain a doubt) it seems the contrary is by omission enacted! By the same argument, no man in England possesses the right of self-defence. The law provides for his punishment if he assaults another, but has not enacted, so far as I know (any more than the law of Jamaica in the case of a slave), that he shall have permission to defend himself against a murderous weapon in the hand of an assailant.

By such disingenuous perversions are the characters of the British colonists vilified and held up to the detestation of their country, and of mankind! Let Mr. Stephen produce one authenticated instance of a slave having been, not hanged, but punished in any way, for exercising the right of self-defence, when wantonly assaulted, and I shall give up the colonists, as well deserving all the unmerciful abuse he pours upon them. *

* Even *this* charge against the colonists, so well supported by proof, and so credible in itself, is repeated by the Edinburgh Review, No. 82. p. 468.

'SECTION VIII. — Concluding remarks on the defenceless situation of slaves in our colonies, in relation to strangers of free condition. p. 192.

Consistency of Mr. Stephen's remarks.

When a man has accomplished an object on which his heart has been set, he may be permitted to exult a little on the occasion, as Mr. Stephen does, now that he 'has opened the eye of the privy council, 'and of parliament, to the hitherto concealed cha-'racter of the colonial laws," and proved that the British colonists are not only cruel oppressors, but shameless adulterers and murderers, denying not only legal protection to their slaves, but even the right of self-defence against the most unprovoked outrage. Except a little vapouring of this description, there is nothing worth notice in this section; unless it may be the following specimen of our author's consistency: —

'The negro is in some respects a slave to every white man in the community. He works indeed only for one, but is liable to be beaten and injured by all the rest, *as much as* if he stood in a servile relation towards them all.' p. 192.

The most ignorant African negro, a Mongula even, would laugh at the absurdity, if told that he was as much at the mercy of every individual in the community as of his master! Mr. S. indeed, when he returns to reason, acknowledges himself that, 'after 'all, it must be admitted that the nature of the con-'nection with the master is of infinitely more conse-'quence to the destiny of the slave, than the 'relations which he bears to all the world besides.' p. 194.

On the benefits of civil society.

'CHAPTER V.—Of the legal nature and incidents of West India slavery, in its relations to the police and civil government of the country.' p. 197.

'SECTION I.—Of the ordinary benefits of civil society which are withheld from the negro slave.' p. 197.

'Security of person and property, education, and municipal capacities, rights, and privileges of various kinds, profitable or honourable, are the advantages which man in general derives from the social union. He is delivered from the perils of savage solitude or anarchy, his mind is cultivated, his manners are improved, and a variety of paths are opened to the attainment of new comforts and enjoyments, including property, civil distinctions, authority, and honours.' p. 197.

In the state the negroes came from Africa, does Mr. S. mean to say they were fit to enjoy civil distinctions, authority, and honours? Does he think that even yet they are fitted to enjoy them, or in a state to be entrusted with the same privileges as the people of the mother country, brought up in a free and civilized state, with habits of industry, self-guidance, and subordination? But is it true that all the benefits of civil society enumerated by Mr. S. are withheld from them? Can it be pretended that they are disturbed in the possession of their property, or that they are not delivered from 'the 'perils of savage solitude or anarchy'? Can it be denied that their minds are in some degree cultivated, and their manners improved? whence else the acknowledged superiority of the creoles to the imported Africans? whence else the horror these always express, when speaking of the wars and

anarchy of Africa, and the insecurity there of even life itself?

Among the ordinary benefits of society enumerated as wrongfully withheld from the negro slaves, we find that of being proctors or solicitors, factors, and notaries, p. 199. And, although not aware of any law to prevent it, we must certainly allow, that we have never known any of ours filling such offices; except, perhaps, that of factor, it being a very common thing for plantation-slaves in Jamaica, to send provisions, fruits, and small-stock, to slaves in Kingston to sell for them.

'Ships were also frequently commanded by Roman slaves: a striking contrast to the manners of the West Indies; where, though they are much employed as seamen, a slave was perhaps never known to fill the station of a subordinate officer, much less a master, of the smallest coasting vessel.' p. 199.

Here our author is, as usual, very ill-informed on his subject. It is quite a common thing for slaves to *command* coasting vessels in the West Indies: many such cases are within my own knowledge, in the coasting trade of Jamaica; and what will appear yet more extraordinary, I have frequently known such slave captains commanding free people. Without going farther, I have myself a slave commanding a coasting vessel; and my neighbour Mr. Taylor, at Morant Bay, has several. If this is doubted, let the custom-house of Morant Bay be referred to.

'Section II.—The education of Slaves is shamefully neglected in the laws and institutions of our colonies.'—p. 200. Education of slaves.

There would be a want of candour in not admit-

ting that school learning is yet but very little known in the colonies; and that, as regards education, the labourers certainly are as far behind those of the mother country, as they exceed them in the enjoyment of physical comforts. When it is considered, however, how slow the progress of education was in England itself; how recently this blessing has been extended to the great mass of the people; and what room is even yet left for its extension, particularly among the operative manufacturers, great allowance surely ought to be made for the colonies: more especially when it is further considered, what peculiar difficulties were to encounter among a people, brought from the most barbarous regions of the earth, composed of different tribes, and speaking different tongues, nearly all past the age of education, and able to acquire only a very imperfect knowledge of the English language. In an old country, where in the course of ages education has become pretty general, it is easy to extend it; but very different is the case in the West Indies, where ignorance almost universal prevails, and where teachers must be brought from a distant country to an unhealthy climate, at an enormous expense.

When all these things are contemplated, it surely is unreasonable to attach so much blame to the colonists; who, besides, are now placed in such a precarious situation by the proceedings of the emancipation societies, &c. in this country, that few of them have the means, were they ever so anxious, to

get out schoolmasters, and send their labourers to school. Yet, notwithstanding all these manifold difficulties, a beginning has been made; and in the parish where I resided, and where twenty years ago there scarcely was a school known, there are now at least four, attended by free children of colour and slaves. In the course of a few years there will be a greater facility of extending education, as teachers will be got in the island without the necessity of bringing them from a foreign country.

The following passage is scarcely worth notice, but we select it as shewing the spirit of the work:

'They (the negroes) may, and do learn, many new vices, the necessary fruit of oppression; while they lose almost all the ingenuous virtues that belonged to their native freedom.' p. 202.

That the African tribes, who were brought into Jamaica confessedly rude and barbarous pagans, the slaves of slaves, have lost their native *ingenuous virtues*, acquired new vices, and are consequently retrograding to greater barbarism, under the management and government of a civilized people, is a proposition only to be equalled in absurdity by that already noticed—'that a slave in our colonies is as 'much at the mercy of *every* free man in the com-'munity as of his master.'

When the state of education in the colonies is spoken of in the mother country, it is always with reference exclusively to the slaves. The numerous middle class of free coloured people is seldom noticed; indeed. it is very easy to see that many of the self-sufficient reformers of the colonies are absolutely

ignorant of the existence of such a class. The slaves and the masters, associated in their imaginations with ideas of oppression and suffering, comprehend all they know of those distant possessions; and all their aim is to raise the one class and put down the other, indifferent about the means and reckless of the consequences. The want of local knowledge, and the utter incapacity of such persons to perform the task they so confidently undertake, is here particularly striking. Education in all countries has descended from the higher to the lower classes; and in Jamaica the free people of colour must first be educated, before that blessing can be extended generally to the slaves. To that class, therefore, attention should in the first instance be directed. That much has been done for them, cannot be denied; but it is equally undeniable, that much yet remains to be done; and, if any thing I say could avail in directing increased attention to so important an object, I would urge it as being the best means, not only of extending education to the slaves, but of securing and retaining the attachment and loyalty of the free coloured people. It has often been remarked of that class, and with too much truth, that they are improvident and indolent in the extreme, and in general very useless members of society; but (although involving most momentous considerations to the public safety and welfare) the cause why they are so, is but seldom asked, and but little attended to. Were it possible to ascertain what proportion of the whole earnings of the resi-

dent colonists goes to purchase the freedom of slaves, and to provide for them as free people, it would shew an increase of numbers going on, and a transfer of wealth to that class, leading to consequences which do not seem yet to have been sufficiently estimated or attended to. There have been frequent discussions respecting the political privileges of the free people of colour; but how much more important is it that they should be educated, and made useful members of society, that those privileges, which cannot be for ever withheld, may be progressively and safely extended to them! It deserves consideration also that, treated as the West Indies now are, by many in the mother country,—held up as a mark for the finger of scorn to point at, it is not to be expected that young men of liberal education will continue to seek their fortune in them: a great misfortune in many respects to the colonies, but an additional reason for cultivating the native resources.*

* The following list of subscriptions to establish a free school for the uneducated children of colour in the parish of Manchester, which I copy from the Jamaica Royal Gazette of 1823, may tend to satisfy some readers that the colonists are not quite so hostile to education, or so indifferent about promoting it, as they may have been led to suppose:

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Hon. Richard Boucher ..	100	0	0	George Dempster, Esq....	25	0	0
Hon. Wm. Burge.....	50	0	0	Robert Green, Esq.....	50	0	0
Mrs. Burge	50	0	0	Alex. Heron, Esq.	30	0	0
C. P. Berry, Esq. M.A...	25	0	0	Isaac M'Corkhill, Esq....	25	0	0
Hon. Wm. Rowe.....	25	0	0	William Abel, Esq.....	25	0	0
Rev. Geo. Wilson Bridges	25	0	0	James Daly, Esq.	50	0	0
Edward Owen, Esq.....	50	0	0	Samuel Glanville, Esq. ..	50	0	0
James Brown, Esq.....	25	0	0	Barnaby Maddan, Esq. ..	53	6	8
Daniel Virtue, Esq.....	50	0	0	John Gautier, Esq.....	25	0	0

'SECTION III.—The sacred duty of instructing the infant or adult slaves in the principles of Christianity, and providing for them the means of public worship, is equally neglected.' p. 203.

The importance of religious instruction is felt as strongly by the colonists as by their brethren at home, although Mr. Stephen argues, as if they were

---

	£	s.	d.
David Hollingsworth, Esq.	25	0	0
Edward Peart, Esq.	50	0	0
W. Peart, Esq.	50	0	0
James Swaby, Esq.	50	0	0
Mrs. Frances King	50	0	0
Robert Lyle, Esq.	50	0	0
Francis Hull, Esq.	50	0	0
Thomas Pitter, Esq.	50	0	0
Charles J. Pitter, Esq.	25	0	0
C. P. M'Nally, Esq.	70	0	0
John Geddes, Esq.	50	0	0
R. C. Gibb, Esq.	50	0	0
Samuel Greaves, Esq.	25	0	0
Maximilian J. Wolff, Esq.	25	0	0
John Harrison, Esq.	50	0	0
George Napier, Esq.	25	0	0
Thomas Butler, Esq.	32	10	0
John Tucker, Esq.	16	0	0
S. V. Tamlin, Esq.	21	6	8
James Sutherland, Esq.	25	0	0
J. S. Cummine, Esq.	16	0	0
R. H. Richardson, Esq.	40	0	0
Richard Bayley, Esq.	21	6	8
William Milne, Esq.	40	0	0
Charles Dryden, Esq.	21	6	8
John Reed, Esq.	25	0	0
Isaac Isaacs, Esq.	25	0	0
J. R. Tomlinson	21	6	8
John Coley, Esq.	25	0	0
Thomas Hart, Esq.	25	0	0

	£	s.	d.
Martin Morgan, Esq.	16	0	0
Dennis Dwyer, Esq.	16	0	0
Luke Bramwell, Esq.	30	0	0
George Herriot, Esq.	16	0	0
George Powell, Esq.	25	0	0
D. Sutherland, Esq.	16	0	0
Randall Dale, Esq.	20	0	0
Robert Darling, Esq.	16	0	0
Henry Bonthrone, Esq.	25	0	0
Charles Newman, Esq.	25	0	0
John Dobson, Esq.	16	0	0
George Young, Esq.	16	0	0
R. Thompson, Esq.	25	0	0
T. W. Tayler, Esq.	16	0	0
John Walker, Esq.	25	0	0
William Gunter, Esq.	20	0	0
John Morgan, Esq.	20	0	0
Richard Bygrave, Esq.	25	0	0
Mark Raven, Esq.	20	0	0
James Mitchell, Esq.	25	0	0
David Shiels, Esq.	25	0	0
W. Forbes, Esq.	20	0	0
John Davy, Esq.	25	0	0
Alexander Moore, Esq.	25	0	0
—— Roberts, (of Silver Grove), Esq.	25	0	0

*** Subscriptions will be thankfully received from any person, and for lesser sums than above.

not merely indifferent, but absolutely hostile to it; an idea very remote from the truth, though in unison with his other charges against them. If a glimpse of candour should pierce through his prejudices, he may perhaps deign to inquire with what feelings the measures lately adopted by government for the religious instruction of the slaves have been greeted by the legislative assemblies, and by the population in the colonies.

The exaggerated account given of the means of education possessed by the labouring poor of the mother country, where, we are told, 'the young are 'individually as well as *collectively, privately* as well 'as *publicly* instructed,' is evidently intended to give effect by contrast to the great want of it in the colonies.* Into such a comparison we dare not

* Not to speak of the thousands of sallow boys and girls that one sees issuing from the manufacturing establishments in our large towns, where at a tender age (and just when education should commence) they are corrupted by the crowding together of the sexes, and by bad example,—even if we go to that part of the empire where the blessing of education is said to be most general, shall we find that even there, 'the young are *individually* as well as *collectively, publicly* as well as *privately* instructed?' From a statement by a committee of the General Assembly of the church of Scotland in 1825, I quote the following paragraph on this subject:

'The Synods of Argyle, Glenelg, Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, Orkney, and Zetland, situate chiefly in the highlands and islands, and containing only 143 parishes, and a population of 377,730 persons, are, as stated in the parochial returns, in the most urgent need of not less than 250 additional schools.

'The number of scholars that would attend each of these 250 schools, it is computed, at a low average, would amount to 42. It follows therefore, that in these Synods there are 10,500 children left without the means of education; and the committee are quite satisfied, that the number is, in fact, *much greater* than the calculated number of 10,500.

'These 10,500 children alluded to, are all, it is to be noticed, under 15 years of age. If persons of all ages are included, the number of those not taught to read

follow him; but some excuse for acknowledged inferiority may be found in what he himself states:

'A great portion of the adults in the colonies had notoriously been brought from a country, where, with the exception of a few Mahometans, there are none but pagan inhabitants. Besides, the parents or ancestors of the creole negroes were of the same hapless description; and in some of our colonies, a generation has not yet passed away since they were first settled by new imported African slaves.' p. 206.

What, it may be asked, could be expected of such scholars set down to learn the A B C? yet this has been attempted, and by planters too, who are represented so hostile to the instruction of their slaves, as not even to suffer them to hear the word of God preached. A few years ago some well meaning individuals, whose enthusiasm much outweighed their judgment, set on foot, in one of the most respectable parishes in Jamaica, a Sunday school for the instruction of adult slaves: no obstruction was offered to their benevolent designs by the authorities; on the contrary, every encouragement was given to the negroes to attend. For several weeks, perhaps months, novelty gathered greater numbers to the school-house than it could contain; and the zealous promoters of the undertaking regularly at-

---

almost exceeds belief. But how could it be otherwise, when more parishes than one are described as not having a sufficient number of schools to accommodate one-tenth of their population? Several are said to be in need of 3 and 4, and one of even 6 schools; and as to another, the appalling fact is mentioned, that it consists of 1000 square miles, and has a population of 4747 souls, and that of these only 995 have learned to read at all.'

tended, anxious to realize what they had so sanguinely represented as practicable. Need the sequel be told: novelty wore off by the irksomeness to adults of attending school like children; zeal wore off by a painful conviction of the impracticability of the scheme. The school, at first over-crowded, had soon a very moderate attendance, became neglected, and in less than a year not an adult was to be seen at it.

The following extract of a return by the Rev. John West, Rector of St. Thomas in the East, in 1817, may be given in confirmation of the difficulty stated in regard to the education of slaves.

'The fact is, in respect to slaves in general, that their knowledge of the English language is so very limited, that they can derive little or no advantage from their attendance in church. They are so conscious of this defect, that when I go to church for the express purpose of catechising them, very few will attend, and not one of these will utter a word but what has been put in his mouth.'—*Quoted by Mr. Stephen, p.* 223.

Passing over the account Mr. S. has given of the means of religious instruction afforded to the slaves in the other islands, of the correctness of which I have not the same means of judging, I proceed to that which he gives of the situation, in this respect, of the slaves in Jamaica.

'Jamaica has 21 parishes, and we learn from the Governor's late returns, that each parish has a rector. The salaries are obviously much too small to afford a curate; but this defect has been supplied by an act of December, 1816, (one of the good effects of the Register controversy,) so far as to enable the Governor to appoint curates, not exceeding the number of benefices, with salaries not exceeding

300*l.* currency, to be paid out of the insular treasury. It is not said that the curates shall hold their appointments for life; and their salaries are not to be paid without certificates that the duties are actually performed.

'Supposing that proper persons can be found for these curacies, (a large supposition when the climate and the expence of subsistence in that country to Europeans in a respectable sphere of life is considered, and that they have residences to provide for themselves), the case will certainly be much improved; and we shall then have 42 clergymen in an island 150 miles long, and 40 on a medium broad; which, supposing them equally dispersed, would be one in each district of near 143 square miles.

'It will be seen at once, what a mockery it would be, to represent this scanty establishment as offering to the slaves in general, amounting by the last printed returns, those of 1812, to about 320,000, the benefit of public worship and instruction. But a very small part of them could ever go to church, even were the whole sabbath their own for devotional uses; whereas it will hereafter be shewn that they are obliged to spend it, or great part of it, in working for their own subsistence.

'It is true that much of the island,—Mr. Edwards supposes above one half of it,—is quite unsettled: but this will not improve our estimate: because the cultivated and uncultivated parts are intermixed, and the whole circumference is in some degree settled and peopled. On the other hand, the country is so mountainous, that the same writer supposes the superficies of the island to exceed the base by one-sixteenth part, and the difficulty of intercourse between various places must, by this cause, be obviously increased. I am credibly informed, that there are well-peopled parts of the island from which the road to the nearest church would measure 50 miles. * * * After stating such facts, it can hardly be necessary to say more of the utter inadequacy of the public means of religious instruction in Jamaica, even supposing all the curates to be found. Taking the whole population of all colours to be 400,000, it would give about 19,000 to each parish, and 9,500 to each clergyman.' p. 214.

Now first, as to the appointment of curates; — the Assembly of Jamaica, considering the salaries first granted too small, raised them from 300*l.* to 500*l.* This was done four years previous to the publication of Mr. Stephen's book, and a man who was taking so deep an interest in these matters could scarcely be ignorant of the fact; — at all events had 50*l.* been *taken from*, instead of 200*l.* added to, the salaries of the curates, who will doubt that Mr. Stephen's attention would have been directed to the circumstance by some of his zealous friends, and that it would have been trumpeted forth triumphantly to prove the anti-christian spirit of a West India legislature?

If our author's information was so good as to well-peopled districts or parts of the island being 50 miles from the nearest church (one third of the whole length of the island!) there was surely no occasion for delicacy in telling where they were. For this omission I can from personal knowledge assign a very good reason — there are none such, nor I believe in any instance, one half the distance. The statement with regard to superficial extent is nearly as incorrect, as there is an immense extent of mountains in the centre of the island, where human foot has scarcely ever trod, and which, in such an estimate, should be taken out of the account, as they lie between the parishes on the north and south sides, and form a waste which may be said to belong to neither. The whole 'circumference' it is true is more or less settled, and it is consequently along the

sea-shore where most of the places of worship are established. To state each of the parishes as averaging one half of the peopled extent he has done, is certainly nearer the mark.

What the average number of persons may be to each parish church, is a matter of much less importance than the number of persons who attend them. Every Christian must wish to see a knowledge of religion imparted to the negroes as speedily as it can be accomplished; but, in the meantime, if churches are provided for those who will attend them, more cannot very reasonably be demanded. That this has not been done, our author does not say; nor in estimating the places of worship does he deign to notice at all those not upon the establishment, the Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Methodist, — in all not less than thirty. Taking these into the account along with the parish churches and chapels of ease, we shall find that Jamaica is by no means so very destitute of places of worship as it has been represented, although there is indeed ample room for many more.

Little more than 20 years ago the churches were so ill attended that in some of the country parishes the doors frequently were not even opened on Sunday. Since then the number of churches of one kind or other has been doubled, nay trebled, and yet they are all, so far as I have seen, fully attended. And while I endeavour to correct misrepresentation as to the present state of Jamaica, I readily allow

that if the desire for religious instruction continue to spread as it has done of late years, the present means of affording it will certainly not be adequate to the wants of the people. That adequate means should be supplied is assuredly the desire of the colonists; and from the part government has recently taken in sending out bishops, as well as from the general feeling of the country, it is to be hoped that means will not be wanting, even if the colonists themselves are unable to bear the expence; perhaps, indeed, it would be unreasonable to expect it from them. The part England took in the establishment of colonial slavery is not denied; and if it is to be atoned for now, this will be better done by aiding to extend the blessings of religion and education to the negroes, than by pressing crude and premature schemes of emancipation; which would, by casting them loose from authority, subordination, and industry, be the most effectual means that could be devised, of putting an end to the present fair prospect of their being in time able to appreciate, purchase, and enjoy a state of freedom.

General improvement in the state of society—its causes.

The better observance of Sunday and attendance at church, is not confined to the slaves, but applies equally to the whole community: and is but a part of a general improvement that has taken place in the character and condition of all classes, within the last fifteen years: an improvement which, I have no hesitation to say, may challenge comparison in magnitude with any thing on record, in any country. The

causes which have produced so great a change deserve investigation. In the houses of overseers of the present day there is a sobriety, good order, and decorum, so entirely different from what prevailed twenty or twenty-five years ago, as can scarcely be believed by those who have not seen it. I have heard this attributed, and I think not improperly, to those circumstances in the mother country which favoured the extension of education; and particularly to the great advance which took place in the value of farm produce after the breaking out of the late war, which enabled the middle classes in Scotland and the north of Ireland, whence Jamaica is principally supplied with its white population, to give a better education to their families than they had previously done; and to send more of them abroad. The consequence was, that at about that period a class of young men sought their fortunes in the colonies, much superior to the indented servants who were before sent out by agents, and to those adventurers frequently carried out on speculation, in ship loads, for sale to whoever would pay their passage. —That this is one cause which unperceived, like the silent hand of time, has had a very favourable influence, no one will deny. These young men, at first book-keepers, became overseers, and many of them are now deservedly in the confidence of the proprietors as managers of their estates. The influence of the overseer, correct in his own conduct, kind to his book-keepers, while he exacts from them that attention to duty, of which they see an example in him-

self, has naturally a powerful effect upon them; and even upon the slaves, who are much influenced by the persons in authority over them, so much so that it is proverbial among them, '*Good massa make good 'nigger.*'

Other causes have also contributed to produce the change in question. Proprietors, with scarcely an exception, as far as my knowledge goes, in their instructions to their managers have expressed an anxious desire that the comfort and happiness of their people should be made a paramount object.

The legislature has also acted upon the same humane and liberal principles; and in the slave codes of 1809 and 1816, some excellent regulations, which had previously been adopted by the more liberal, were made imperative upon all.—New and extensive privileges were granted to free persons of colour: the arbitrary punishment of slaves was restrained and taken almost entirely out of the hands of subordinate persons; the working of sugar mills, which had previously encroached so far on Sunday that it was scarcely felt as a day of rest by either the white people or the negroes, was forbidden from seven o'clock on Saturday evening till five on Monday morning: magistrates were appointed a council of protection to attend to the complaints of the slaves, &c.

These, and many other excellent regulations of the same kind, seemed rather to follow than lead public opinion, upon which a great change had been effected, by the introduction of a better educated class of white people,—by the abolition of the slave trade,

and discussions attendant thereon; and by the greater means of religious instruction afforded by the curates and missionaries.

The abolition was particularly important; not, as theorists at home argue, because it prevented the planters from being able to replace the slaves they 'murdered by bad treatment;' for they are as cheaply replaced now as they were then; but because it drew the attention of humane people more to a consideration of the state of the slaves; and, above all, because it put an end to the importation of African superstition and barbarism, of which a constant supply was before kept up by the new comers, and more than any thing else, had the effect of keeping the whole body in a state of barbarism.

Baptism of Negroes.

The facts here stated, and which are well known to every person who has a practical knowledge of Jamaica, will account, in some measure, for a circumstance which has afforded a fine field for Mr. Stephen's ridicule—the baptism of so many negroes in so short a period of time. Quoting from the returns of the different clergymen to the governor, such paragraphs as suited his purpose, he thus proceeds: —'One or two of the rectors in Jamaica have 'boasted of very wonderful success in the way of 'conversion; and if the administration of the bap-'tismal right to all adult slaves, who come or are 'brought by their masters to receive it, is sufficient 'evidence of their Christian faith, the facts they 'state will certainly justify the boast.—There has

'certainly been nothing equal to it in the world since 'the apostolic age.' p. 224.

Referring to a paragraph which states that towards the end of the preceding year 1816, 'a great anxi-'ety was manifested, and which at present continues 'for baptism, both by the slaves and their masters,'—he says, 'the latter part of this proposition, *per-'haps*, does not mean that the proprietors desired it 'for *themselves*, but for their slaves.' p. 224.

'No compulsion, I believe, (the same rector goes 'on to say) has been exercised by the master; all 'has been voluntary on the part of the slave; the 'negroes having freely thrown away their African 'superstitions and prejudices.'—Upon this Mr. S. observes, 'What a singular and fortunate coinci-'dence with the new-born eager anxiety of the pro-'prietors to bring them to the font!!!'

'It appears,' adds he, 'from another of these re-'turns, that great numbers on the plantations were 'baptized at the same time; *it is to be hoped the dri-'vers were not behind them on these, as on all other 'musters.*' p. 225.

More need not be added to shew the spirit in which this part of the work is written. It is very evident that Mr. S. and his party, having laboured to hold up the colonists to detestation as a body sunk in an abyss of moral depravity and irreligion, unparalleled in the world, are very reluctant to admit facts having a tendency to make them appear in any more favourable light.

That in Jamaica the number of established churches

has, within a few years, been doubled; that as many sectarian places of worship have, during the same period, been erected in the island; and yet that the whole are fully attended, happens, however, to be beyond contradiction; and the only comfort Mr. S. can find, is in taking the merit to himself, by ascribing it to the Registry Bill!

Of the number of marriages now taking place among the free people of colour and among the slaves, he was no doubt equally well informed; but he seems to have considered it prudent to pass this over *sub silentio.* That of late years an unprecedented number of pagans have sought and obtained admission within the pale of the church, is a mortifying fact, which he endeavours to disparage and ridicule with a levity unworthy of such a serious subject; at once deciding that the poor ignorant negroes should have been spurned from the font, till they were able fully to comprehend the baptismal service of the church. By those who had to decide this question practically, it was not so easily solved: difficulties presented themselves on both sides, and they could but choose between less or greater evils. They decided in favour of humanity; they admitted the negro, well knowing that though he was weak, the cause of religion was strong: *he* might be benefited; *it* could not be injured.

Perhaps it may be asked, what benefit can baptism confer upon minds so clouded in darkness? I answer, that in the first instance it has perhaps more of a temporal than a spiritual influence; but still it

is clearing the foundation upon which the superstructure is to be raised. The pagan African, who sees civilized Christians free from the dreadful superstitions that oppress and often prey upon his imagination till his life sinks under them, conceives that by being christened the spell is broken, and the powers of darkness overcome.

This is one step, and no unimportant one; for although the African himself, generally speaking, seldom can be made to comprehend much of the tenets of religion, the mind of the rising generation is in a great measure freed from the shackles of parental superstitions, and becomes more susceptible of religious principles. Nor is it meant to be inferred, that even among the Africans there are not some who will attain to a considerable degree of religious knowledge. Another beneficial result is, that it imparts to the negro higher notions of the moral character he has to support. 'You a Christian, and do such a thing!' —or, 'you a Christian and a thief!' is a common expression of reproach among them. —That they should at once shake off bad habits and vices, is not to be expected; if these are only lessened or made less frequent, an important good is effected.

Night Funerals.

And even if christening the negroes had done nothing else but put an end to night funerals among them, humanity could not have considered it altogether in vain; as this truly pernicious custom, which their native superstition regarded as a solemn rite on no account to be dispensed with, was, perhaps, of all

others that ever existed, the most fruitful in disorder and suffering. The whole night, or the greater part of it, was spent in drumming on the gumbay, singing, dancing, and drinking:—before committing the corpse to the earth the whole party issued forth in a state of intoxication, two of them bearing the coffin on their heads, and proceeded in a body, dancing and singing, to every house in the plantation village, into which the deceased was carried to take leave. This, however, was not always done on friendly terms; sometimes the corpse was made to charge the owner of the house with having done him an injury, or with owing him money; and in this case the persons carrying him pretended that he would not go away, and that they were not able to take him away, till satisfaction was given. When I had been but a few weeks in Jamaica, I was one night suddenly awakened out of sleep by a strange and unearthly sound of music, unlike any thing I had ever before heard. I started out of bed, and throwing up the window, directly under it beheld a large body of negroes, two of them with a coffin on their heads, with which they were wheeling round and dancing; the others carrying torches, and all dancing and singing, or rather yelling unlike any thing human. I shall never forget the impression of horror which this spectacle made on my mind, and which was long after kept alive by the death-beat of the gumbay, heard almost every night on some one or other of the plantations in the neighbourhood.*

* The following air is one I have heard sung by them on these occasions, and probably African; to me it appears strikingly wild and melancholy, associated as it

The extinction of this most barbarous custom is a very happy and important change. The very sight of it was horrible to an European; and to the negroes it was the occasion, not of casual but of continual excesses, producing a degree of over-excitement by drinking and carousing, which, just as surely as the next morning dawned, incapacitated some of those thoughtless creatures from attending their duty, and consequently subjected them to punishment. To avoid this for the moment, but greatly to aggravate it in the end, the conscious offender deserted his duty, and suffered the consequences. Negro funerals now take place in the day-time: if none of themselves are qualified, a white person always attends to read the burial service; I have often done so myself; and there is invariably the utmost solemnity observed.

The concluding paragraph of this section affords a striking specimen of the richness of Mr. Stephen's language, and the poverty of his argument.

'Who could not shudder, even on temporal views, at the prospects of his native land, were our churches pulled down and our clergy put to silence?—The fall of the state, though a certain, would be a less

---

is in my mind with such recollections, and heard for the first time sung by savages interring their dead at the midnight hour.

dreadful consequence, than the utter dissolution of morals. France tried the impious experiment at home; *we try it in our colonies.* Our course is certainly safer than hers; but is it less affronting to God? — is it less injurious to man? Where can the influence of religion be more wholesome or necessary than in a land of slave masters and slaves? and in what private relation can the depravity which results from the overthrow of religious establishments, produce such dreadful effects?' p. 229.

If there is any meaning in this, it would seem to be that England had '*pulled down the churches and* '*overthrown the religious establishments in her colonies;*' but it is difficult to comprehend how such establishments could be overthrown where they are only erecting. The paragraph quoted is like many others in the same work, 'full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.'

He concludes thus: "the result of our enquiries 'on this most important head, is, that the slave is 'not indebted to the state or government under which 'he lives, for ANY means of religious instruction, 'private or public, individual or general!' p. 229.

Missionaries. 'SECTION IV. — The efforts of European piety and charity to remedy these neglects, have not any where been aided by the Colonial Legislatures, and in some islands have been actively opposed by them.' p. 230.

This section contains a history of the sectarians in the West Indies, possessing however very little interest.

The Quakers were the first of the sects who entered upon this difficult and desolate field of christian enterprise, in the island of Barbadoes; but, as

it would appear, upon a very limited scale, and they were altogether unsuccessful.

The Moravians sent out a mission in 1732, and in 1787 they had ministers in Antigua, St. Christopher's, Barbadoes, and Jamaica, as well as in Surinam, and the Danish islands. This humble and zealous sect, with the limited means it possessed, seems to have been very deservedly successful in some of the islands, as the simplicity of their manners, and the equal simplicity of the tenets they inculcated, were eminently fitted to impress on the hearts of a savage people feelings of kindness and brotherly love, without exciting those *frightful horrors* which were too much a primary object with their successors; and which, grafted on African superstition, often produced the most lamentable effects. Few of the Moravians found their way to Jamaica, where they had consequently only a small number of converts; but there is no charge of their exertions having been obstructed or opposed.

Missionaries from sects which sprung up in the mother country, known by the name of Methodists, commenced their labours in the West Indies under Dr. Coke, a follower of Mr. Wesley, in 1787; speaking of these new teachers, 'it is a striking fact,' says Mr. S. 'that they have no where met so much dis-'couragement as in the islands of St. Vincent and 'Jamaica; where from the circumstances already 'noticed, scarcely any other means whatever of con-'veying one ray of Christian light to the slaves ex-'isted. Happily the law, as has been shewn, fur-

'nished no weapons at first,' (and when afterwards?) 'for open prosecution, but indirect and disorderly 'means were in some places resorted to for the dis- 'couragement and suppression of these intruders: 'personal insult, and interruption of their preaching, 'for instance, were safe engines of private malice in 'communities where the popular sense effectually 'controls the ordinary administration of justice.' p. 240. This paragraph, which expressly admits that the legislature had no hand in the outrages charged, 'the law furnishing no weapons,' is all that the section contains as respects Jamaica, to prove the position at the head of it, that 'the colonial le- 'gislatures had not only failed to aid, but were active 'in hostility;' and yet Jamaica and St. Vincent, be it remembered, are particularly specified as criminals in the charge.

This charge against the legislature failing, it became necessary to have recourse to one of those bold assertions, which however unfounded, it is not easy to disprove. Not one word of evidence of any kind is given to shew, that in Jamaica 'the popular 'sense effectually controls the ordinary administra- 'tion of justice.' There is in that island a Chief Justice of the Supreme and Assize Courts, an Attorney General, and an Advocate General, all officers of the crown, and gentlemen of high respectability, holding their appointments for life: are we to understand that these are included among the 'white mob' whose testimony is unworthy of attention? if not, we must take leave to ask, why, such unexception-

able evidence being at command, it has never been adduced to establish so extraordinary a fact as that in a British colony the popular sense effectually controls the ordinary administration of justice?

The following passage is quoted, not only as affording an instance of Mr. Stephen's disposition to vilify the established clergy, and extol the sectaries, but also as it has reference to a calamity with which his name has ever been associated in the colonies — the insurrection in Barbadoes, generally ascribed to the discussions on the Registry Bill.

'If there had been a single Methodist teacher in Barbadoes in 1816, he and the society that sent him there would inevitably have been accused of instigating the insurrection of that year; and he might probably have been arrested as a traitor, tried by a West Indian tribunal, and condemned for that *strange* crime, however incredible it is to every dispassionate and rational mind. But happily there was no Methodist or other sectarian teacher to be the scapegoat of the sins of oppression on this occasion. The planters, aided by *the clergy of the establishment and the low white creoles*, both peculiarly numerous there, had long before effectually crushed the Methodist mission at its birth; and the other societies had not afterwards ventured to enter on a field in which the barriers of paganism were so well defended, both by temporal and *spiritual* arms.' p. 242.

As if apprehensive that setting the sectarians so high above the established church might give offence to its friends in the mother country, he makes a long appeal to them, (p. 244,) the object of which seems to be to turn their displeasure against the colonists, who being, he says, principally of the Presbyterian or Roman Catholic church, can have no affection for the establishment, although from '*an*

'*insidious policy they affect an anti-sectarian zeal.*' He therefore cautions them against being misled by 'the *craft* of the colonial advocates,' to suppose that they had really any prepossession in favour of 'her 'learned, prudent, and venerable clergy.' The passage is too long for insertion; but the following melancholy account of the great number of white pagans in the British colonies, is selected, that the active benevolence of the humane in England may be directed to their miserable situation.

'As to a great part of the white colonists born and brought up in the West Indies, I am at a loss for any criterion by which their religious classification can be fixed. *Many of them*, I believe, have rarely been in a place of worship in their lives; and no *small portion of them* in islands that had no resident clergyman, have probably never been baptized.' p. 245.

'Under such circumstances (continues he) zeal for the establishment, even in the colonies that are by law within its pale, would not well account for an intolerance of sectaries, except from the *acknowledged fact* that the rectors did not, while the sectarian teachers did, tacitly rebuke the masters and disturb their consciences, by attempting to make Christians of men whom they treated, and were determined still to treat as brutes.' p. 246.

How the hardened consciences of such sinners as the masters are here described, happen to be so easily disturbed by a *tacit rebuke*, seems mysterious; as also, how the sectarians merit such a compliment at the expence of the established clergy of the colonies. By whom is this 'fact acknowledged?'

'SECTION V.—Of the obstacles which have been opposed to the religious instruction of the slaves; and of the means of promoting it in future.' p. 250.

Obstacles opposed to the Missionaries.

A detail of these obstacles, we are informed, has been rendered unnecessary by a pamphlet published by the Right Hon. Sir George Rose, '*On the means and importance of converting the Slaves in the West Indies to Christianity*;' to which Mr. S. refers, very justly remarking that the views of this gentleman, who is himself the possessor of West India property, will naturally be received with greater confidence than his.

He informs us, however, that 'though the persecutions of the sectarians have generally ceased 'since *the era of the Registry Bill*, the spirit which 'gave birth to them is still active, and the pretences 'on which they proceeded are still propagated with 'rancorous assiduity.'

Do the missionaries in Jamaica say so? or is this one of the necessary qualifications of every admission that must be made favourable to the colonists? I am personally acquainted with a good many of the Wesleyan missionaries in the part of the island where I resided, worthy and respectable men; and I can scarcely doubt that they will bear testimony to the good will with which their labours have been countenanced, and the respect paid to themselves. If in any individual instance it has been otherwise,

I would be satisfied to put it to themselves to say whose fault it was.*

* Since the above was written, I have learned that this testimony has been afforded, in very expressive terms, by the Wesleyan missionaries in Jamaica. But—because they bear testimony (from the evidence of their senses) to facts which are at variance with the statements of the emancipators at home, with whom it would seem the Wesleyans are anxious to keep on cordial terms—that evidence which their own agents on the spot have given, is formally disavowed by the body at home, and the offending persons are censured and recalled.

One of the resolutions of the missionaries in Jamaica, which are stated to have been carried *unanimously* (6th September, 1824), is to this effect:—'The members 'of this meeting acknowledge, with sentiments of sincere gratitude, the obligations 'which they have been laid under to many gentlemen in different parts of the island, 'for acts of the most disinterested kindness; and it is but just to state, that, to the 'magistracy of Jamaica their thanks are particularly due, for that good-will which 'they have generally shewn toward the spread of morality and religion among the 'slaves and other classes: and the very few instances of contrary treatment, they 'have been disposed to attribute more to other causes, than to a wish to debar the 'slaves from the blessings of religion. These sentiments they have always enter-'tained of the gentlemen and magistrates of the colony, and have often communi-'cated the same to the committee of the Wesleyan missions.'

Now, what does the committee say to this? 'We have been well used here, and 'our labours countenanced,' say their agents in Jamaica. 'Nay, but you have 'been ill used,' says the committee at London, 'and we will censure and recal you 'if you do not say so.' Take their own words. 'The committee are not unac-'quainted with the menaces with which their missionaries have of late been visited 'in some parts of Jamaica; the obstructions which have been thrown in the way, in 'some places, to the exercise of their ministry; the refusal of the magistrates, even 'in the course of the last year, to license their missionaries, without any legal 'authority for so doing; and the threats of their expulsion from the island, which 'have of late been frequently resorted to,' &c.

It is but fair to add, that the committee at London represents the resolutions in Jamaica as the act of '*a very few*' of their missionaries. Their first resolution, indeed, bears 'That they have *no information* of the number of missionaries in Ja-'maica, who attended the said meeting.' But a little after, in the same page, they speak decidedly on the subject, and tell us, 'they are imperatively called upon by 'this *unguarded* and improper act of A VERY FEW of the missionaries employed by 'the society in Jamaica, to object,' &c.

These curious documents are given at length in the Appendix. The missionaries in Jamaica will probably be more '*guarded*' in their resolutions in future. Whether those of the committee in London are most calculated to remove or to confirm the prejudices imputed to the colonists, is a question not difficult to decide.

Disappointed of the promised detail of the obstacles opposed to the religious instruction of the slaves in the British West India islands, the reader finds he has to wade through a tedious account of the state of education and religion in the colonial possessions of foreign countries. This I shall pass over as briefly as possible. Our author's object will be sufficiently clear from the following extract: State of religion in the Spanish colonies.

'While the French West India Company, directed of course by planters and colonial merchants, had the charge of providing religious establishments in the Antilles, that sacred duty was wholly neglected.' p. 259.

'In the Dutch colonies, where the business of internal legislation was committed to a West India Company and an assembly of planters, the irreligious spirit, commonly generated by the habits of West India oppression, was wholly unrestrained; and, in consequence, the imparting Christian instruction to slaves was there not only wholly neglected, but even, if I may trust their own writers, prohibited by law.' p. 264.

Along with these, (the Dutch and French,) are classed the English colonists, as they formerly were in the misfortune of having fairer complexions, which our author supposes may in some degree account for the fact he assumes, that they are worse masters than the more swarthy and ignorant Spaniards and Portuguese; and in conclusion the former are thus admonished: —

'These impious views, and the correspondent practice at St. Domingo, have been terribly chastised. May other colonies, while there is yet time, learn wisdom from the example!' p. 267.

St. Domingo indeed! The British colonists trembling for their lives, called upon to take warning St. Domingo.

from *its* fate by a man who is himself holding up a torch to light among them the same dreadful flame, which laid that once happy and flourishing country in ashes, and drenched its fields with the blood of its inhabitants! Compare the proceedings of *Les amis de Noirs*, the friends of the blacks, of 1788, with those of the emancipation societies of the present day, and say in what they differ? Is the danger of propagating theories of liberty and equality less, because it is done under the cloak of religion? I will not enter on a recital of the horrid massacres to which the mania of the pretended philanthropists of that age gave birth, and which were only such as may with certainty be expected when ignorant savages are instigated to insurrection, and are able to overwhelm those in authority over them. But the very sight of that fine island in its present state is sufficient to overpower the mind with the most melancholy reflections. Scarcely a mark of cultivation is to be seen, or in such mere specks as marks the poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants; while in every direction one distinguishes among its native woods the fields now grown over with a light shrubbery, which were once flourishing plantations, and the abode of a numerous and far happier people. What has now become of them? At night the mariner passing along the shore can scarcely see a glimmering light to mark a human habitation; while round Cape Nichola Mole, where the navy of France was wont to ride, not a craft of any description could be seen, as I passed it on three or four differ-

ent occasions. How different a scene does the island of Jamaica present, with its richly cultivated fields, its numerous mansions, and the coasting vessels crowding along its shores! and how lamentable to think, that by the interference of persons who have never seen it, and have no knowledge of the sum of human happiness they are endangering, it may soon be as desolate as St. Domingo!

State of religion in the Spanish colonies.

But to return to our author's praise of the Spaniards,—and it was necessary to give praise somewhere, if only to blacken English slavery by the comparison —

'The Spanish and Portuguese slaves,' says he, 'are as well instructed in religion as their masters; but then it is a fact equally indisputable, that they are fed, clothed, and governed, with a degree of liberality and kindness, which in other colonies is utterly unknown. We have incidentally seen also, that the servile code is among them proportionably lenient and just, beyond that of the British islands. Christianity then, is at least a safe inmate in West India settlements, since those of Spain and Portugal are pre-eminently tranquil, and exempt from interior convulsions.' p. 267.

We might here ask, by what means the slaves constantly pouring in from Africa, come to be as well instructed as their masters?—are they sent to school together? Or are we to understand there are no schools, and that it would have been the same thing to have said, *that the masters are as ignorant as their slaves?*

'The negroes of the French Islands,' says Mr. Stephen, 'if we may judge by those of St. Domingo,

'were still in general *baptised, and taught some ex-*
'*terior ceremonies of religion*, but were left wholly
'uninstructed in the doctrines and practical pre-
'cepts of the gospel.' p. 258.

Is it otherwise with the slaves in the Spanish colonies? If Mr. S. means that they are as well instructed as their masters, in some of the exterior ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion, it is saying little; and not much, if he means that they are as well instructed in the doctrines and practical precepts of the gospel as their masters the Spaniards, the very by-word of Europe for their ignorance and bigotry, as well as for their shameful system of government in the new world. And is it thus he is to persuade his readers that Spain, enlightened Spain, has done more to propagate religion in the western hemisphere than the educated sons of England!

Island of Cuba.

Of the Spanish written code I do not profess myself able to speak with confidence; but having more than once visited Cuba, its most valuable colony, and seen the actual state of the slaves there, I can most solemnly avouch, that in dress and in appearance, they are decidedly inferior to the slaves in Jamaica; nor is this my own opinion only, for I have heard the same remark made by others. Whether this may be attributable to the influx of Africans, or whether they are worked harder, or allowed less time for the cultivation of their grounds, I shall not say, because I had not full means of ascertain-

ing: but a fair conclusion on this point may be drawn from the fact, that neither in the Havannah, nor St. Jago de Cuba, the two principal towns, are the negro markets supplied with poultry, vegetables, fruit, esculent roots, &c. at all so abundantly as at Kingston; from which it certainly would appear, that they raise less of those articles, or find less demand for them.

As to religion, the church doors, it is true, are always open; but, except on one occasion, I never saw above a dozen persons at a time inside one of them; and these were women whom, from their sable robes and dejected countenances, I concluded to be mourners. The one occasion alluded to was a festival of the patron Saint of a church a few miles out of the city of St. Jago. The concourse was immense; the church was surrounded with tents, completely full of people dancing, drinking, smoking segars, and engaged at every kind of gambling.

One of my acquaintance, whom I met there, directed my attention to a large awning, one side of which was fixed to the church wall pretty high, and the other, descending like the roof of a house, was supported by low posts at some distance, forming under it a spacious shed. I observed that it looked like the sail of a vessel. 'Yes,' answered he, 'and perhaps it will amuse you to learn how it came here. Last August, a schooner called the Esperanza, on a voyage to the main, encountered a a dreadful storm; the sailors, apprehensive of pe-

rishing, implored protection from the patron Saint of this church; and vowed that if spared to return, the main sail of the schooner should be given as an acknowledgment. The good Saint heard their prayer, abated the storm, and brought them safely into port. The day after their arrival, the master of the vessel was not a little astonished at meeting four of his men lugging the mainsail of his vessel up one of the steep streets of St. Jago; and enquiring the cause, they stated it to him as I have mentioned. He remonstrated; he durst do no more; and even offered them a sum of money for the Saint, which he assured them would be much more acceptable; but they were not to be turned aside from the fulfilment of their vow; and here the sail is, and, as you see, a good one.'

Is this the kind of religion which produces so much happiness among the slaves in the Spanish colonies? if so, the Sunday negro market of Jamaica certainly ought not to be abolished. Whatever influence the exterior ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion may have on the minds of the negroes, if they ever go to church, it is impossible that the priests in the town, engaged as they constantly are at the billiard tables, can command much of their veneration. What priests or churches there are in the interior of the country, for the instruction of the plantation slaves, I do not know; and I find no information on the subject in Mr. Stephen's book, notwithstanding the very perfect knowledge he pretends to have of the state of religion in the Spanish

colonies. I hope he will tell us, in the second division of his work, how many churches there are in this island, 700 miles long; how far distant one may be from a place of worship by the nearest road; and what is the average number of persons committed to the care of each billiard-playing priest.

As to tranquillity, for which he represents the Spanish colonies as so 'pre-eminent,' my impression was very different indeed. Contrary to any thing I had ever witnessed in Jamaica, I here saw that every gentleman coming from the country into town or going out of it, carried a holster on his saddle, with a pair of loaded pistols. Does this bespeak tranquillity? Shortly also before my first visit in 1814, a serious disturbance had taken place among the slaves in an inland district, which had created considerable alarm. I was moreover informed that several hordes of runaway slaves had collected in the interior, and bid defiance to any means the government possessed to dislodge them; nor, considering the immense number of Africans I then saw pouring in, could I wonder that such should be the case. These circumstances left on my mind an impression, that the colony was in a state very different from that "pre-eminent tranquillity" Mr. Stephen describes. One advantage,—for such, as regards character, it seems to be —the Spanish colonies certainly do possess over those with which they have been contrasted: they publish no newspapers in Cuba, except a sort of official Gazette, and consequently, as it admits nothing of this kind, any acts of cruelty committed, or occasi-

onal alarms, can scarcely be known in the next island; and are still less likely to be heard of in Europe.

The coloured and white classes are so completely amalgamated, that they are scarcely distinguishable: the few white people you see, especially the men, have the most forbidding aspect to the eye of a stranger that can well be imagined. They are universally shabby in their dress, dirty, ignorant, bigoted, and indolent; with exception of the Catalonians, who are not deficient in activity and enterprize. These occupy all the retail shops, and active situations—are the very life of the community, and seem to form the only tie that connects the colony with the mother country.

However good the written Spanish code may be, it is not easy to see how it can have much practical influence in a colony where little or no regard is paid to the authority of the mother country. Even in the public offices, bribery is not only practised, but in fact justified, as the sole means the officers have of being paid. That the law, which entitles a slave who has the means, to purchase his freedom, is more liberal than that of Jamaica, I admit; but the actual benefit resulting from it to the slaves depends upon the manner in which they are treated generally on the plantations—what means are afforded them of acquiring sufficient property to purchase freedom—how the price is ascertained, and by what practical mode the emancipation is effected. These are important points on which the value of

the law wholly depends; to speak of them would require a practical and minute knowledge of the plantation economy in Cuba, which I do not possess; only, as already stated, I thought the appearance of the slaves inferior to that of the slaves in Jamaica, and the negro markets (a fair criterion of their wealth) were not by any means so well supplied as in that island. For Mr. Stephen's purpose it is enough that a good law has been made at Madrid, without enquiring whether it is enforced in the colonies; while every confessedly humane law made by the English colonists themselves, and therefore more likely surely to be acted upon, is, by persons who have no personal knowledge, boldly and impudently pronounced to be of no practical effect!

Whatever may be the merit of the Spanish law of redemption in practice, of which Mr. S. knows perhaps as little as myself, it is not necessary to refer to it as the cause of a larger free coloured population in the Spanish than in the English islands, as this certainly is to be attributed to their earlier settlement, and to the greater number and the more permanent residence there of emigrants and their offspring from the mother country;—which again has had the effect of assimilating the white and coloured classes, and bringing them more on a level than in the English Islands; where, generally speaking, every person who has it in his power, prefers returning to his native land, and sending his children there. Yet even in Jamaica a few more years must approximate the two classes, much in the same manner they now are in

Cuba, with (let it be hoped) this most important difference, that the lower classes will there be raised in intellect to the higher, instead of the higher, as in Cuba, sinking to the lower.

I have gone further into this subject, than I at first intended; but having had an opportunity of estimating, as well as my judgment enabled me, the state of the Spanish colonies, there may be those who will be inclined to think the testimony of a person who has seen them, entitled to as much regard as the assertions of one who has not.

When I first landed at St. Jago de Cuba, it was noon; but no foreigner dare leave his vessel till visited by the authorities and examined; and these Dons will not move out till about five o'clock, when the heat has subsided, and they have had their *siesta* or afternoon sleep. A soldier, attired in only his shirt and trowsers, with a rusty sword by his side, is then sent on board, whose duty it is to take all strangers' before the governor. It was evening when I reached the house of his Excellency: he inquired where I came from —if I had any newspapers —what was doing in South America, &c. His lady was lolling on a couch, smoking a segar. Among other charges against the vessel was one for the inquisition, one for pilotage (although we saw no pilot), two dollars and a half per ton of tonnage duty, while vessels of the United States were charged only one. This distinction, the more iniquitous from the favourable terms on which their vessels are allowed to enter our West India ports,

still continues; yet this is a country particularly specified by Mr. S. together with *Haiti* and Hindostan, where English shipping is to find employment, and England, much to her benefit, is to be supplied with colonial produce, when her own colonies are happily destroyed.

Change which Englishmen undergo in the colonies.

Mr. Stephen, being aware that there is some difficulty in reconciling his description of Englishmen in the colonies with what they are known to be at home, has given a philosophical, and to himself no doubt satisfactory, explanation of this difficulty, p. 270.

It is however deficient in one very important point, which we hope he will attend to when he returns to the subject, as he has promised to do; and this is, that some of them (a small proportion it is true) have the happiness to return to the land of their fathers, to intermix again with the society there; and as there is no evidence adduced to shew, nor even any allegation, that they are then particularly distinguished as black sheep in the flock; what we wish to know, is, whether, having on their leaving home undergone one *metamorphosis* (from men to brutes), they are by any process he is acquainted with, again, on returning to it, happily restored to their former rank?

Were a person disposed to retaliate on the learned gentleman, he might ask, using the same argument, what effect is likely to be produced on the mind and principles of the man who for hire becomes the ad-

vocate of any cause, however bad, — the worse in fact, the more merit in defending it; and whose greatest accomplishment consequently is, a consummate ability to misrepresent truth and 'make the 'worse appear the better reason'?

Mr. Stephen's hostility to the established clergy.

In accordance with the hostile feeling already noticed towards the established clergy, we are here informed by Mr. Stephen, that 'in one small island, 'there have been two *recent* instances of *regular* clergymen having been tried on charges of murdering 'their slaves in the exercise of a master's power. 'In one of the cases, the *reverend* defendant was acquitted; but in the other, a conviction of manslaugher by excessive whipping took place, as official evidence, laid on the table of the house of 'commons, has attested. In another island, within 'my own recollection,* the beneficed clergyman of 'the chief town was presented ex-officio by the 'grand jury, for a public nuisance, for loading a 'wretched female domestic slave with heavy irons 'and weights, and sending her daily, for many 'months, through the streets in that condition, to 'bring water from a distant well.' Such excesses, he admits, are not common, and proceeds, 'at present, it sometimes happens, that beneficed clergymen are not only slave-owners, but planters, and 'as attornies and managers for absent proprietors,

* Mr. Stephen's recollection is not of yesterday, and as the two former instances would seem to be beyond it, some idea may be formed, of how "recent" occurrence they are.

'extensively employed in the conduct of sugar 'estates; but their successors, at least, should be 'prevented from engaging in such occupations. Their 'secular character is objection enough; more espe- 'cially for men who truly allege that they have not 'time enough for all their pastoral duties.' p. 272.

No colonists will attempt to justify or palliate such atrocities on the part of a clergyman or any other person; nor will it be denied that they have quite enough to do with their pastoral duties, without engaging in any others: but this charge, to say the least of it, is much too general. There may have been among the clergymen of the West Indies some bad characters, as we have seen at home, and without going far back to look for them; there may also be among them some employed in the very improper manner described, but not one case of the kind has ever come within my knowledge, nor do I believe there are any such in Jamaica; if there are, it would have been much more consistent with justice and fair dealing to have named the guilty, than to have cast a general imputation, by expressing himself in a way calculated to make his readers suppose the regular clergy are, as attornies or managers, extensively employed in the conduct of sugar estates! But in this we recognize a common artifice in the abuse of the colonists, to make the charge general, and avoid specifications, which might be brought to the proof and disproved.

Sectarians, why received with distrust.

Our author's object clearly is to excite a prejudice against the established church, in order to exalt the sectarians, whom he extols as the assiduous inculcators of submission and reverence to their temporal superiors. Lest, however, those 'temporal superiors' should not be sufficiently sensible of their obligations, he suggests that they (the sectarians) should be put above the law of the country in which they reside, or in other words that they should not to be tried there for any traitorous or seditious practices they may be guilty of, but sent to England, where alone in their case a judge and jury sufficiently impartial can be had: —just such an idea, as that the Irish priests should be sent to Rome to be tried for traitorous or seditious practices in Ireland.

I am far from meaning, by any thing I have said on the subject, to disparage the missionaries, against whom I deny that there exists any prejudice in the colonies, except alone what arises from the connexion some of them have with societies in England, whose object the colonists view as involving their destruction; but nothing can be more evident, than that this proposition by Mr. Stephen (too monstrous to merit a moment's attention) would increase that prejudice, embroil the missionaries with the colonists, and injure the cause of religion which he would seem to wish to promote. A precedent for such a law, he tells us, is to be found (exactly where it might be looked for) in the provisions for making the officers and friends of government safe in obeying the British revenue laws forced upon North America,

14 Geo. III. c. 39. laws which could not be enforced, and led to the sanguinary conflict which terminated in the loss of those colonies. But the colonies of the present day are weak, and may easily be trodden on. 'What was *boldness* in the one case, would be *impu-* 'dence in the other. England must be reduced 'very low indeed, before she can feel greatly alarm- 'ed at a Charibean island, like Lord Grizzle in Tom 'Thumb, exclaiming, S'death I'll be a rebel!' *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxv. p. 344.

From what has been stated it appears, that religion has made considerable progress in Jamaica; and as the colonists and their opponents are agreed that it ought to be encouraged and extended; the only question is how this may be best done? The colonists think by a regular clergy: the anticolonists assert that it can only be done by sectarians. Why, it may be asked, should there be any difference about the means? The cause is obvious; the enemies of the colonies have an ulterior object which they think may be better promoted by employing men of their own political opinions, zealous not in religion only, and who may preach something more than Christianity to the slaves. For no other cause is it that the colonists have any distrust of the missionaries. If sent out merely as preachers of the gospel, unconnected with party, and with proper testimonials as to character and education, they would be received with open arms. Even in spite of the causes for distrust of them, have they not been received in Jamaica as ministers of the gospel ought? Let not

the colonists be blamed for their suspicions, their lives and fortunes are at stake: religious enthusiasm is a powerful engine; and where can it be so dangerous as in a country where ignorant slaves constitute the bulk of the population?

A leading man in the missionary societies, thus expresses himself with regard to the colonists:

'The slave, however, has a temporal interest in the religion of his master; the bell which calls to public worship may have some slight and indirect influence even on the great majority of planters who uniformly neglect the summons. It is something when the petty despot, amidst his pride and anger, is reminded that there is a God whom other men adore; that there is a faith which recognizes, in the abject despised negro, a child of our common parents, a fellow heir of immortality—that there is a law, believed by our forefathers to come from God, which denounces tremendous future penalties against the merciless and the oppressor.'—*Mr. Stephen*, p. 221.

Let the most dispassionate man on earth say, if a colonist could be expected to read this and not feel his heart burn within him? Let him say, if men sent forth under the patronage of societies or individuals holding such language, could be expected to be received without some slight degree of suspicion, even if there were no instances of their intermingling political sentiments with their doctrine? and, finally, let him say if the distrust of the missionaries is most to be attributed to the unchristian spirit existing in the colonies, or at home?

It is to be hoped the sending bishops to the colonies, and the further aid to be given in building churches, will be attended with the best effects in extending the knowledge of religion among the

slaves, without endangering that subordination so necessary even to their own well-being in their present state. It is to be regretted, however, that some favour is not shewn, in the proposed measures, to the Presbyterian form of worship, as a considerable number of the white people resident in Jamaica come from Scotland and the north of Ireland, and are attached by early associations to that church. Report says that to petitions presented on their behalf, the colonial secretary replied that the aid to be given to the colonies in building churches, was meant for the benefit of the black people, and not of the white. This may not be correct; but if such was the answer, it may be observed that the churches most likely to be well attended by the whites, would also, from their example, be most likely to be attended by the slaves; and consequently, that religion would be promoted by shewing some favour to this form of worship. The parish of St. Thomas in the East, where I resided, has three Episcopal churches, and three Wesleyan, all fully attended; and the founding of a Presbyterian church would be hailed with much joy by a respectable white population attached to the establishment of their native land.*

* On Charley-hill, a little eminence rising on the south side of the rich and beautiful vale of Plantain Garden River, a large house was built some years ago by the proprietor, Mr. Arcedeckne, or rather the walls only were built, and in that state it was left, and now stands. There could not possibly be a finer situation for a church; it would be in view of the plantations that lie immediately under it, and in a calm morning the bell would be heard by upwards of 2000 people within the compass of two miles. The object is worthy the attention of all who take an interest in promoting Christianity among the slaves.

Negro Funerals.

When Mr. Stephen descends from general accusations to specific charges, there is no difficulty in meeting him. Thus, after describing in this chapter how much attention was paid by the Athenians, the Romans, and in more modern times by the French, to the funerals of their slaves, he goes on to say — 'But we should search in vain in the laws or practices of any of the British colonies, speaking generally as to the practice, for equal humanity.' There

"——The sacred dust
Of this heaven-labour'd form, erect, divine,"

'when no longer animated with that soul which 'groaned under oppression, and no longer fit for the 'master's purposes, is abandoned with unfeeling dis-'regard, to the care of kindred wretches, to be in-'terred at their discretion in the nearest vacant soil. 'The funereal rites commonly paid to ordinary plan-'tation slaves are supplied, not by the care of the 'master, but by their relatives on the same estate; 'and are in the forms of African superstition, not of 'christian worship.' p. 275.

Never was there a more palpable misrepresentation. As formerly mentioned, the slaves about 20 years ago were, with few exceptions, buried at night; and the funereal rites were in the forms of African superstition. But as religion advanced, this barbarous custom gradually disappeared; and a positive law in 1816 put an end to night funerals, that source of crime and of misery. Christianity would have effected this before now, if no

such law had been enacted. But had this change (beneficial as I have shewn it to be) been attempted by law twenty years sooner, with the superstitious veneration the negroes then attached to night funerals, they would have felt it as a deprivation of a solemn rite which they owed to the dead; and, I need scarcely add, they would have resisted its abolition accordingly. Can enthusiasm, which vainly thinks to mould the human mind as a potter does his clay, not read in such facts an useful lesson, to let education and religion take their course in eradicating superstition and conveying light into the darkness of paganism, without attempting to accomplish in a day what can only be the work of years? What the utmost stretch of power could scarcely have effected then, has now been, without a murmur, almost imperceptibly accomplished.

The funerals of slaves in Jamaica for years past have in no respect differed from those of white people. When a negro's death is occasioned by an acute disorder, it happens in the hospital, where he has been under the care of the medical attendant*; when it occurs from a decay of life, he is not removed from the comforts which his own house affords; but in either case he has the kind offices of those most nearly related to him by the ties of blood and affection. When he expires, notice is brought to the master or overseer, and generally communicated in

* Every plantation has an hospital, and these buildings are so respectable in size and appearance, that they are often mistaken by strangers for the mansion-houses.

the short but emphatic expression, such a one 'is gone.' Immediate directions are given to the carpenters on the plantation to make a coffin; and some little things are always given for the funeral, such as rum and sugar, and a little flour and butter to make cakes or rusks; often on such occasions, I have known masters, and even managers of estates, give from their own private stock half a dozen bottles of Madeira wine, and a dozen of brown stout, to shew their respect for a valuable and faithful servant.

The shroud and furniture for the coffin are provided by the family of the deceased; white if a single, and black if a married person, with corresponding mounting or plates; in short, in every respect the same as in the case of white persons. During the night, and it is never more than one, that the corpse is in the house, a few religious friends attend, psalms are sung, and prayers given by some of their own (negro) preachers. The following day the funeral takes place, and is always numerously attended by the relations of the deceased, by all the old and invalided of the plantation village, and by the women exempted from labour on account of pregnancy or attention to their families; nor, indeed, is permission to attend ever refused to a slave on a neighbouring plantation, if the deceased has been his intimate friend, relation, or countryman. At the hour appointed, a white person attends, accompanied frequently by others, to read the service appointed by the church of England, in committing dust to dust; and this most solemn and impressive

ceremony is listened to by white and black, with an attention and humility evincing a sense, that 'our brother here departed,' has gone where we must all follow, and where human distinctions are at an end. While the grave is closing, bread and wine are handed round, which, from seeing it done at the funerals of white persons, the negroes perhaps consider a part of the ceremony; of course, it is little more than a matter of form, and a couple of bottles of Madeira is the usual quantity procured for the occasion by the ordinary class of slaves.

From a latent taint of African superstition, the negroes universally attach great importance to having what they call 'a good burial.' Hence those who are in only indifferent circumstances, are often careful to reserve means for the purpose; others, indifferent to the morrow, are still more so as to what shall follow, when the wants of life are at an end; yet a thoughtless improvident creature of this description, '*not sorry for himself*,' as the negroes express it, is respected in death by his friends, who would consider it as an indelible disgrace to themselves, if he was not buried '*as a Christian ought*.'

Near towns, and on some plantations, a piece of ground is enclosed as a burial-place for the negroes; but the more common practice upon plantations with both whites and blacks, is to inter the dead in a small corner of their respective gardens set aside for the purpose; and as the negroes attach an importance to the burial of the dead, they extend the same feeling to the graves, over which they erect tombs built com-

monly of brick, and neatly white-washed. The white-washing is carefully repeated every Christmas morning, and formerly it was on these occasions customary to kill a white cock, and sprinkle his blood over the graves of the family; but this last part of the ceremony seems now to be little attended to, and is likely to be soon extinct. In public negro burial grounds on plantations they build into the tombs, at one end, a piece of hard and almost imperishable wood, placed upright and having the top cut into rough outlines of the human figure, which gives the spot a very striking and not unimposing effect.

Such are negro funerals, as I have seen them, and such, however much at variance with Mr. Stephen's account of the matter, I avouch to be the general practice.

Laws to which the slaves are subject.

'SECTION VI.—The West India slave is not only subject to all the criminal laws by which the offences of free persons are punished, but to an additional penal code of great extent and severity, made for the government of his condition alone.' p. 276.

It might, in like manner, be made the subject of complaint, that an English soldier is subject not only to all the criminal laws by which the offences of others are punished, but to an additional code (the mutiny act), made for the government of his condition alone. But if the slave is subject to a code 'of great extent and severity,' made for men of his condition, it can scarcely be any great aggravation of his state to be subject in common with free persons to the law of England, so far as it is in

force in the colony to which he belongs, or rather, I am inclined to think, subject to it on points only which are not provided for by the slave code.

However excellent the law of England, it is manifest it can be but partially applicable in colonies where the bulk of the population are slaves; and hence the origin of the slave codes. But whatever laws the slave may be subject to, the truth is, that in practice, the power of correction possessed by the master, limited as the punishment is that he can inflict, renders an appeal to them but seldom necessary. That this power may in some instances be used to the injury of the slave, is true; but it is equally true, that it commonly stands between him and public prosecution, and this often in cases when the law of England would consign him to transportation or to the public executioner.

'SECONDLY: He is treated as an offender against society, for acts which amount only to violations of his private duties as a slave.' p. 287. Desertion and vagrancy.

This broad and general charge rests wholly on the punishment of desertion; and desertion, we are told, is not an offence against society! If Mr. Stephen had himself had an opportunity of acquiring a little practical knowledge of what he thinks he is capable of teaching others,—if he had had his poultry-house robbed, his sheep carried off, and his provision-fields destroyed by wandering vagabonds, it is not unlikely he would have discovered that desertion

is a sufficiently grievous injury to society, independently of the mere loss of labour to the master.

In a subsequent page he acknowledges that desertions may be of dangerous consequences to the public safety, but this seems only for the purpose of aggravating the charge.

'It may perhaps be alleged, that these violations of the private duties of a slave are not punished by the law as such, but rather as offences dangerous to the public safety of the islands. Some of the meliorating acts have speciously recited such views, as apologies for their severity against runaways, or wandering slaves; and I admit that apprehensions of public danger may in some islands, as in Jamaica, where maroonage in the mountains was of a troublesome extent, have been among the true motives; but that the loss sustained by the owners, in the privation of their property in the fugitives, or through the suspension of their labours, was the leading consideration with an assembly of slave masters, cannot well be doubted; and might clearly be discovered so to have been, from a particular examination of the provisions of these runaway laws. To what other principle, for instance, can we ascribe the severity, still adhered to, of punishing with death a departure from the island? As far as the public safety is concerned, the migration of the runaway from the colony is a deliverance from, rather than an aggravation of, the dangers arising from his desertion.' p. 291.

And, he might have added, that, but for this cruel and impolitic punishment, the deserter would have been able to spend a few weeks or months occasionally in St. Domingo.

In ordinary cases of desertion, masters are always satisfied with the power of punishment they have in their own hands, without incurring the expence and trouble of going into a court of law. When it has been found impossible to keep a wandering vaga-

bond of this kind at home, and it has become an absolute tax upon the master to be constantly sending people into the woods after him; besides, as is most commonly the case, having to pay for the depredation he has committed; then, but not till then, he is taken before a court, and may be committed to the workhouse for life, or transported, as the case shall seem to require, when established by proper evidence, and upon the oath of his master, that he has been found altogether incorrigible. The latter punishment is inflicted only on very bad characters, such as are thieves as well as deserters. When a slave is thus condemned, although a healthy young man in the prime of life, the compensation to his master cannot exceed fifty pounds currency, about thirty-five pounds sterling; of course, it is a great sacrifice, and never submitted to but in a case altogether incorrigible, and where example is absolutely necessary.

Desertion and going off the island.

A slave going off, or attempting, or conspiring to go off the island, by the law of Jamaica may be punished with death; upon which Mr. S. thus expresses himself:

"Now let it be shewn that human oppression and cruelty have, in any parts of the known world, except in these Christian colonies, punished desertion, though beyond the territory, with death, except when to a public enemy.* Such also is the equality and justice of these last and best fruits of the best colonial legislation,

* It is not very difficult to shew this: an English soldier, who, even in time of peace, 'shall be convicted of having 'deserted the service, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as shall by a 'court-martial be inflicted.'—Art. of War, sect. vi. art. 1.

that while the servile accessory to this offence is punishable with death, and the free coloured accessory with transportation, the white accessory's punishment is limited to a fine of three hundred pounds currency, and imprisonment not exceeding twelve months.' p. 289.

In a preceding page our author takes notice of a Roman law, by which, if the master was murdered in his own house, all the slaves resident therein at the time were liable to be put to death; and mentions, that on the assassination of Pedanius Secundus by one of his own slaves, this law was actually put in force against four hundred persons! But in the usual spirit of his work, palliating the severity of the slave laws of every other country and age, and aggravating that of the British colonies, he adds: 'But the law though thus *once* executed, was probably made *in terrorem* only.' p. 284.* Such a surmise with regard to this law of Jamaica (although he does not say that it has been even 'once' executed), of course never could present itself to Mr. Stephen, although it could scarcely have any other

* The murder of Pedanius Secundus by one of his slaves, and the consequent execution of *four hundred* that belonged to him, are related by Tacitus in the fourteenth book of his Annals: and it certainly cannot be inferred from any thing which *he* says, that 'the law was,' as Mr. Stephen is pleased to inform his readers, only 'once executed,' though this instance of its being so was thought worthy of notice by the historian from the number of persons that suffered, the opposition of the populace and some of the senators to such atrocious cruelty and injustice, and the debate in the senate which that opposition occasioned. 'Ceterum cum *vetere ex more* familiam omnem, quæ sub eodem tecto mansitaverat, ad supplicium agi oporteret, concursu plebis, quæ tot innoxios protegeret, usque ad seditionem ventum est,' &c.

In another place he says, 'Factum est senatus consultum ultioni juxta et securitati, ut si quis à suis servis interfectus esset, ii quoque qui, testamento manumissi, sub eodem tecto mansissent, *inter servos supplicia penderent.*—*Ann. lib.* xiii. Surely these expressions imply that the execution of the slaves in such cases was a customary thing.

object, or effect any other purpose, but that which he supposes to have been the object of the Roman law. If a slave has gone off the island, it signifies little to him what punishment the law denounces against him, when beyond its reach; and as to *attempting* to go off, it is manifest there can scarcely ever be proof of this, until he is outside of a harbour making the attempt, and when there is little chance of being detained. That many slaves do go off, is true; nor can this be prevented in an island where there are so many free people of colour, and where the police laws are so little attended to. These laws require that a slave leaving home, or permitted to find employment for himself, as they often are by persons who own only a few (paying a stated sum weekly or monthly to their masters), must have a ticket to shew; and it is falsely maintained in England, that every free negro found without testimonials of freedom, is forthwith apprehended and sold into slavery: but the truth is that a black man who calls himself free, going on board a ship in any port of Jamaica to seek employment as a labourer to assist in taking on board the cargo, is engaged as such without any questions being asked, much less any testimonials of freedom demanded. It is true some precaution is used in employing blacks to go away with the vessel as seamen or stewards; but the master of a ship ready to sail, if at a loss for hands (as not unfrequently happens), will not ask 'documentary 'proof' of freedom: it is enough for him, that the person is reputed free in the port.

Under this provision of the slave code, so triumphantly selected to prove oppression and cruelty, I have never seen — never read, nor heard of a conviction against principal or accessory, notwithstanding Mr. Stephen's belief and assurance, 'that in 'practice the laws are not likely to be more humane 'than in letter;' and notwithstanding that thirst for blood which he must suppose exists among the colonists, when he infers that the words in their acts of Assembly—'such other punishment as the said jus-'tices shall think proper to inflict,' are intended covertly to confer a right to take away life:'—'*although* '*with the usual address of the ostensible law-makers,* '*the express mention of death is omitted.*' p. 288. What a horrible accusation! Thirst for the blood of the innocent, combined with meanness enough to seek it in a way that dare not be avowed!

It is urged also as heinous injustice, that the punishment of the white accessory in carrying a slave off the island, is limited to a fine of three hundred pounds currency, and twelve months' imprisonment. A ship-master will probably consider this quite penal enough to deter him from intentionally committing the offence: if so, the object of the law is accomplished; and if the slaves and their black servile accessories could in the same manner be punished by fine and imprisonment, there would be no occasion to deter them by the threat of capital punishment.

Vagrancy and theft.

The next charge against Jamaica under this head is, that the law permits a master, with the sanction

of a magistrate, to put a small iron collar on the neck of an ill-disposed slave, addicted to desertion and committing depredations on the other negroes, as a mark to distinguish him, that when found from home he may be known as a bad character, and apprehended. We have here an amusing display of the complacency with which Mr. Stephen assumes the merit of every improvement the Assembly makes on the laws; and of his self-sufficiency in judging of its acts. Many and great, it would appear, have been its obligations to the strictures in the 'former 'unpublished, but not *unknown*, edition of his work.' We are told of 'a secret sympathy between its pro-'gressive spirit of improvement and the progressive 'strictures of his work.' Nay, the Assembly of this great island made itself so little in 1816, as to throw a clause into the consolidated slave law, for the express purpose of '*baffling a stricture*' of his, the publication of which was expected!!! p. 293.

'It is not easy,' says he, 'to see why even an iron collar (formerly chains were used), should for this purpose be permitted. The master can stand in no need of such intimation; and as to the police, it subjects every slave whose master is unknown, or who is found beyond the limits of a plantation without a note in writing from the owner or manager, to be treated as a deserter.' p. 293.

This is not correct; a negro 'can be deemed a 'runaway only, when absent without leave for the 'space of five days, or found at the distance of eight 'miles from home, without a ticket.'* Besides, even this law is in fact almost a dead letter. The

* Consol. Slave Law, cap. xxv. § 62.

roads are crowded with negroes travelling to and fro; but it is seldom asked who they are, or whither they are going, and still less if they have got a written note: indeed so unusual is this question, that it is felt as an insult, and generally retorted upon by anything but a civil answer. A strange negro, found off the road, skulking about a plantation, or in a suspicious place of concealment, of course must give an account of himself, or he is sent to the workhouse; but the negro who has got a collar on his neck, if *he* quits the limits of the plantation, is sure of being taken up by the first negro he meets: and thus a benefit is done not only to the master, but to the slave himself in reclaiming him from such a vicious habit, besides the good of the example to others.

'There is, however,' continues Mr. Stephen, 'a further amendment in the last Jamaica act, that the collar must be put on by the directions of a magistrate. This I admit to be an improvement; though probably there will be little difficulty in any case to get the sanction of some neighbouring planter in the commission of the peace, when a master thinks fit to apply for it.' p. 293.

This is quite in character; if an improvement is undeniable, it must always be admitted with such qualifications as may make it appear of little or no value. But Mr. S. is not ignorant what human nature is; that 'man, dressed up in a little brief authority,' is seldom altogether insensible to the importance thereby attached to himself, and that it is more likely the justice will make the overseers feel this, than be so facile, when they come to solicit his magisterial sanction, and state the grounds, as of course they must, upon which they ask it.

It is proper to add, that such degrading designations are now very rarely to be seen, and are going fast out of use. About twenty years ago, negroes working on the road sides in chains, presented a common and most revolting spectacle; but, with exception of criminals in the public houses of correction, there is not now an instance of a negro carrying a chain to be seen from one end of the island to the other.

'I will not detain the reader,' says Mr. S. '*with any more* specimens of laws, by which the private offence of a slave against his master is treated as a public crime.' p. 296.

Only ONE specimen of these laws has been produced, viz. that against desertion, which, as respects Jamaica, he acknowledges himself to be 'an offence of dangerous consequence to the state!' Was there any reason for not giving another specimen of such laws, besides the fear of wearing out the reader's patience?

Causes of desertion.

As desertion and the punishment of it have been the subject of so much misrepresentation and unfair inference in England, it may not be superfluous to add a few remarks while the subject is under consideration. In some few cases, no doubt, it may be occasioned by improper treatment; but nothing can be more unwarranted than to set this down as the general cause; for the best treatment often cannot prevent it. The evil has its foundation in the improvident, indolent, and wandering disposition of many of the Africans, and some few also of the creoles; which

no encouragement to industry, no attention or kindness on the part of the master, can overcome. I have myself the misfortune to own two Africans of this description; and cannot better illustrate my assertion than by describing them. They will do nothing whatever for themselves, and prefer an idle wandering life to any possible domestic comforts. Land in full cultivation has been frequently given them for their support, and as long as it continued to yield plantains and edoes, they gathered them; but although allowed the same time for the purpose as the other people, they would never take a hoe in their hand to clean it, and of course it was soon overrun with weeds. This not availing, desertion continuing, and their master being frequently called upon to pay for the thefts and depredations they had committed on other negroes, a weekly allowance of provisions was given them (in addition to their land and regular days) that they might not be driven by hunger to commit theft, or to desert; yet all this has not reclaimed them—they will sometimes come and take their weekly allowance on Monday morning; but instead of going to work, steal off to the woods, and will not be seen again for a month. Instead of giving them, like the others, their annual allowance of clothing at once, they are supplied as they stand in need; and they have been known to sell a new jacket for a quarter dollar, that had cost their master four dollars. If a second shirt is given them, it is readily bartered for a bottle of rum; and washing is entirely out of the question. It is this description of

persons that fill the workhouses in Jamaica, and form the lists of runaways in the newspapers: one of which lists, containing the names and descriptions of fifty vagrants, was lately read by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons, as affording sufficient evidence of the degraded and oppressed condition of the whole slave population, amounting to three hundred and twenty thousand persons.

Slaves not allowed to traffic in the staple of the estate, and why.

'Thirdly, there are many laws, which, with a directly opposite view, and in a spirit strikingly characteristic of West India justice, punish slaves, and slaves only, for acts perfectly innocent in their moral nature, though performed by the master's approbation, and presumably by his command.' p. 296.

This charge is grounded on a restriction found necessary in all the islands to prevent slaves from trafficking in the staple of their master's estates. Accordingly, as Mr. S. mentions, 'in colonies where 'the planters cultivate nothing but the sugar-cane, 'slaves are not restricted from raising or possessing 'any other species of produce than sugar, molasses, 'or rum.' p. 299. The principle upon which this restriction is founded, must be so manifest, that it is almost unnecessary to state it. If a negro on a sugar estate were permitted to make canes an article of traffic, with his master's fields lying (as they are) perfectly open to him, it is evident there could be no preventing him from carrying off and selling as many as he pleased. But though forbidden to traffic in them, or to have them in his possession, *when absent*

from the property to which he belongs, he is not prevented from raising them for his own use.

Again, when the mill is at work and the manufacture of sugar going on, the negroes upon the plantation have free permission to go into the boiling-house and take as much syrup out of the boilers as they choose; such is the universal custom*, although it may appear rather strange to an English landlord,

* Mr. De la Beche notices the same thing: "During crop time they eat as many canes as they please, drink as much hot and cold cane-juice as they think proper, not clandestinely, but as a customary privilege, and in spite of all our vigilance carry off a considerable quantity of sugar for themselves, and of canes for their hogs."

"Amid all the gross representations respecting the food of the poor negroes with which the European ear has been deceived, it has not yet," says Mr. Stephen, "to my knowledge, been asserted that their ordinary beverage is any thing but water." p. 343. It is not easy to say what would satisfy our author either for meat or drink to the negroes. In the paragraph preceding that last quoted, he recommends to the Jamaica reporters to contemplate the conduct of the Roman Censor, "who thought it not too much for each slave to have every day his bottle of wine,"—implying, as it would seem, that the colonial slaves should also have their bottle of wine each after dinner. That water is the 'ordinary' beverage of the negroes and of all classes in the torrid zone, there is no denying; nor have I ever yet heard of a better, or of any thing that could be substituted as an 'ordinary' beverage where people are drinking every hour of the day. But, on most plantations, the negroes at work get a daily allowance of rum; and in wet weather it is commonly given twice a day. The cane-juice, besides being used in the plain state, warm and cold, is frequently mixed with bruised ginger and chaw-stick (a pleasant bitter), and let stand till in a state of fermentation. This the negroes call '*setting liquor for cool drink*;' and it makes a finer and richer beverage than the best ginger beer used in this country.

In the same page from which the last quotation is taken, Mr. S. adds,—"and well would it be for a large majority of the slaves, in some of our islands, if that element (water) in its purity were provided for, or could easily be obtained by them." How they are supplied with water in some of the small islands I do not know; but as respects Jamaica, it may safely be affirmed, that no country in the world is provided with this element in greater abundance or greater purity; and the people at work in the field have a constant supply carried to them. A woman cooks breakfast in the morning for fifteen or twenty of them, carries it out at nine o'clock, and then proceeds to the nearest spring or rivulet for water, which she continues to supply them with through the day.

who would not readily acquiesce in permitting his dependents to go to the mill and help themselves when his wheat was grinding. Here the case is different; the labourer is the property of the landlord, he is permitted to take whatever he requires to supply his own wants, and is presumed to have no temptation to take more; but with such an indulgence as this, what would be the consequence to a planter of allowing his slaves to traffic in his produce? briefly this, that they would save *him* the trouble of selling it. One would think it required great art to bring this forward as a charge of oppression; yet we find even this rising in judgment against the colonists and condemning them; for, says Mr. S. 'what a 'cruel remedy is this, and how revolting to every 'feeling of justice,' &c.

In another part of his work, our author condemns the Act of the Leeward Islands for permitting the masters to diminish the allowances of food which it directs to be given, one fifth during crop time, 'merely,' says he, 'because the slaves may then derive a 'little nutrition from the sugar canes, by sucking 'their raw juices.' p. 446. It would be charitable to suppose he did not know that they are not only permitted to suck the *raw* juices (which however they are very fond of), but to take as much of the boiled juice or syrup as they please. What proportion of their allowances, where food is provided for them, may be rendered unnecessary during crop time, by the 'nutrition' which they derive in this way from the sugar canes I do not know; but I know that on

plantations in Jamaica, where the negroes have not only abundance of other food, but are weekly carrying their surplus plantains, yams, and edoes, to market, or, as I have frequently seen, allowing them to rot upon the trees for want of a market, so strong is their partiality for the boiled cane juice or syrup, that they use a very great quantity of it. It is no uncommon thing, when they gather about the boiling house in the evening, to hear a negro say, as he takes hold of the sugar ladle to fill his calabash, 'this is to be 'my supper to-night.' Nor should I at all pity the man, of whatever colour, or in whatever station, who had such a supper.

A considerable quantity of Indian corn is raised among the young canes for the use of the plantation stock, and is planted and reaped at all seasons: when ripe, the negroes go through the field with baskets and gather the ears, and it may be worth notice, that on such occasions, to prevent their stealing, every negro is allowed to carry home the full of his basket for his pigs and poultry. Such, at least, is the practice on the estates I am acquainted with.

'In Jamaica," says Mr. S. "where there is much 'pasture land, the breeding of horses and mules is a 'source of agricultural profit to the planters: here, 'therefore, slaves were forbidden to own any horse, 'mare, mule, or gelding; and heavy penalties were 'imposed on any planter who might be disposed to 'encourage the industry of any head slave upon his 'pen, by permitting him to acquire such property.' p. 300.

If the illiberal cause here assigned for not permitting the slaves to own horses had been the true one, it certainly is passing strange that they should not have been forbidden to own cattle also, the rearing of which is so much more profitable than the rearing of horses, which in Jamaica are used only for the road, and not at all for agricultural purposes. It is far more probable, that the law had its origin in an idea that while horses were of less value to the slaves, there was danger in allowing them to possess them, as they might be made a bad use of in carrying communications to a distance in time of insurrection. But whatever was the object contemplated by the law, its continuance in the statute book is now sufficiently absurd, when it is notorious that the slaves on many of the sugar estates keep both horses and cattle not covertly, but going at large in their master's pastures, along with his own stock; and when in fact the young men going to Jamaica as book-keepers, generally purchase their riding horses or ponies from the more wealthy slaves.

In noticing these facts, I cannot help recurring to Mr. Stephen's assertion, that the slavery in our colonies is a service without wages, that the poor negroes work solely for the advantage of their masters, and derive no benefit to themselves from their labours. A West Indian proprietor allots a large portion of his estate to the support of his labourers, allows them time to cultivate it, provides them with houses and clothing, supplies them with salt provisions to use with their vegetable food, takes care of

them in sickness, and supports them in old age: is this a service without wages? yet in addition to these the regular wages given them for their labour, the perquisites, or additional advantages they derive from it, are both numerous and important. They partake freely of the rich juice of the cane during the process of manufacture. They are aided with the master's waggons and cattle in carrying their provisions to market. Such of them as have horses, cattle, or asses, keep them at the master's expence. The numerous fruit-trees on the estate, of little value to the master, are turned to advantage by his people; and it is chiefly with the canes and corn cultivated on his extensive fields, that they raise pigs and poultry, which they sell, as they do their surplus provisions and fruit, to procure other comforts.

It should never be forgotten that it is the cultivation of the cane, carried on by the skill and capital of the white people and the labour of the black, which principally brings wealth into these islands, sugar being the staple commodity or manufacture by which all classes there are supported. From this source the slaves are provided for by their masters: hence also they are enabled to obtain additional comforts and enjoyments from the means it affords them of disposing to advantage of their surplus provisions, pigs, and poultry, to the people in business, and to the coasting and English shipping. Abolish this great staple, and the source of wealth is in a great measure lost to the slaves as well as to their masters.

Assembly strange slaves at night.

The fourth charge which Mr. S. brings forward under his section is, that 'slaves are punished for 'mere civil trespasses and trifling misdemeanors, or 'for actions in their nature quite innocent, with a se- 'verity that is reserved in England for petty larceny 'and other infamous crimes.' p. 302.

These offences, so unmercifully punished, are stated to be for '*drumming or dancing; blowing of* '*horns; assembling together for amusement in certain* '*numbers or at certain hours, demanding more than cer-* '*tain regulated rates of wages for their labour as por-* '*ters, boatmen, &c.*' p. 303.

I never heard of such regulations in Jamaica, nor can I find them in the consolidated slave law of that island. On the contrary I find (sect. 36th), that slaves are to have their diversions, and that although the master or manager of a plantation who permits assemblies of strange slaves *at night*, drumming, dancing, and blowing military horns, is punishable, the slaves are not. It is almost superfluous to observe, that the object here is to prevent disorderly or seditious assemblies, not innocent amusement.

The colonists are further accused, however, of the heinous crime of preventing ignorant fanatic slaves from preaching or teaching other slaves, as Anabaptists or otherwise, and the attending nightly or other private meetings, which the preamble to the law justly states, has been found productive of much injury to the slaves. In a note on this subject our

author adds, 'The meetings intended to be restrained 'ed are those held for religious purposes; and the 'object was to check the missionaries, by subjecting 'the poor hearers, as well as the preacher, to severe 'punishments.' p. 303. One would almost be led to suppose that the negroes were locked up in their houses at night, or that there was a police establishment in every village to keep each family inside its own door, in order to prevent them from holding meetings of any kind. The truth, however, is, that when the work of the day is over, they retire to their houses, about seven o'clock, (except those who in crop time are required at the boiling-house,) and spend the evening visiting one another, or holding any kind of meetings they please, just as free from restraint or molestation as the inhabitants of any village in England, provided they make no riotous noise to disturb or alarm the country. In the part of Jamaica where I resided, the slaves on some of the plantations have a religious meeting among themselves every Saturday night or oftener. I have more than once listened in a calm night near enough to hear what was said at such meetings. There was no kind of connection in the discourse, but the sentiments, as far as I could collect them, were good; and the singing, perhaps the most attractive part of the service to a rude people, was excellent.

Such meetings are never interrupted; but of the injurious consequences resulting from an unrestrained admission of fanatic preachers among an ignorant

population, some idea may be formed from the occurrence related in the following paragraph, which I copy from the Kingston Gazette: —

Montego Bay, June 11th, 1824.

'A small degree of hubbub took place near this town on last Sunday morning, occasioned by the baptism of sundry negroes, according to the forms of the Baptist or Anabaptist persuasion. In consequence of information being given to the sitting magistrates that the negroes above alluded to had been at the chapel the whole of Saturday night, and were taken out at two o'clock on Sunday morning to the river to be baptized, they sent for the minister, Mr. Burchell, to whom they related what they had heard. He stated, that the negroes wished to have remained in the chapel during the night, but that he had prevented them. It was true he had taken them out to the river at three o'clock in the morning, but his motive for doing so was to prevent the confusion which he was apprehensive would arise, if it were done during the day. The magistrates, however, were of opinion, that his licence only permitted him to preach or baptize from sun-rise to sun-set, and therefore expected he would conform to it. It appeared that many of the negroes alluded to had been previously christened; that Mr. Burchell knew not to whom they belonged, or anything about them. He was therefore restricted from baptizing any others, unless authorized to do so by the persons under whose care they may be. It was also made to appear, that some of the negroes of this persuasion had already become such proficients as to be able to set up as independent preachers. Mr. Burchell undertook that if he could find out who they were, or where they held their meetings, he would expel them from his congregation, and inform the magistrates of it—so far may be probably very well. We had, however, a few weeks since occasion to remark on the variety of preachers that had in so very short time found their way into this parish, and expressed our fears that no benefit could arise from it; but, on the contrary, we deprecated most seriously the evil tendency which we apprehended from the dissemination of such conflicting doctrines. The evil now

begins to appear: persons, who have been for years christened according to the forms of the church of England, are now rendered uneasy in their minds, because Mr. Burchell tells them they are not christians, and cannot go to heaven unless they undergo his form of baptism;—hundreds, therefore, who have been for years satisfied are now dissatisfied. The result will therefore be a disarrangement of the intellects of many, one or two instances of which have already appeared. We therefore call the attention of the magistracy as well as the proprietors of negroes to the subject. It is one of much delicacy, but should, nevertheless, not be lost sight of.'

Lest this, however, as coming from a colonist, may not satisfy Mr. Stephen that any evil consequences could arise from permitting 'ignorant and superstitious or 'designing negroes' from making a trade of preaching to, and teaching other negroes, I am glad to be able to quote an authority on the subject not liable to the same objection:

'*Kingston, Jan.* 16, 1823.

'NOTICE OF THE WESLEYAN MINISTERS,

'ASSEMBLED IN THEIR ANNUAL MEETING.

'*Resolved*,—1st. Whereas we, having learned that various persons, chiefly negroes, have been found about plantations and estates, calling themselves Methodist Teachers and Preachers, collecting slaves and others, under a pretence of teaching religion, performing marriage, and collecting money, without the knowledge or consent of proprietors, *judge it to be of serious injury to the cause of true religion*, and detrimental to the interest of the community.

'*Resolved*,—2d. That we feel it a duty we owe to our own character as ministers, and to the public at large, to make this open protestation against such irregularities, and to *avow* that we neither *have*, nor *can have*, according to the rules of our church, such persons connected with our body, and, whatever they may call themselves, we know nothing of them.

'*Resolved*,—3d. That the above be published for one month in the Royal Gazette, the St. Jago Gazette, the Cornwall Gazette, and the Cornwall Chronicle, and signed by the chairman and secretary of the meeting.

'JOHN SHIPMAN, Chairman.
'ROBERT YOUNG, Secretary.'

'Fifthly; (continues Mr. Stephen) many offences have been made capital by those laws when perpetrated by a slave, which, when the act of a freeman, are but petty larcenies, misdemeanors, or at most felonies within the benefit of clergy; and in some instances, the negro is punished with death for actions which would subject a freeman to no punishment at all.' p. 303. Obsolete Law.

This heavy charge against the colonists of the present day is proved by reference to some old and obsolete statutes of the Bahamas, Barbadoes, Bermuda, &c. the dates of which, in general, are prudently withheld. No notice of Jamaica.

'Sixthly.—These humane lawgivers have further enlarged their sanguinary catalogue, by punishing *the bare attempt or design* to commit crimes as severely as the crimes themselves.' p. 304. Attempt to murder by poison.

Under this charge Mr. S. specifies 'the attempt 'to steal, murder, rob, burn houses, set on fire sugar 'canes, to poison free persons,' &c. and for proof that the attempt to do such things is felony, cites certain old laws in the margin, one of which (though brought forward to prove the *present* state of slavery in our colonies) he tells us 'he understands is repealed or suspended;' and 'some more of them,' says he, 'may have been repealed since 1788; but 'if so, I am ignorant of the fact.' p. 304. The charge, as respects Jamaica, is, that 'the attempt to

'poison free persons' is punishable with death; for which he refers to the consolidated slave law of 1816, cap. 25. s. 52.

True, by that law it is enacted, that a slave who shall mix poison with intent to give, or cause it to be given, 'although death should not ensue on the 'taking thereof,' shall, when duly convicted, suffer death. But it is not true that this punishment is limited, as Mr. S. says, to the case of an attempt to murder FREE persons.—Now, as to the inhumanity of the law. By Lord Ellenborough's Act an assault with intent to kill is felony; and we put it very confidently to the father of a family in this country to say, if a personal assault upon himself with intent to take his life, is not even a venial crime compared with that of the wretch who puts on his table a dish of deadly poison for his and his family's destruction, even if it providentially happens to be discovered before the fatal purpose has been effected? 'Of all species of deaths,' says Blackstone, 'the 'most detestable is that of poison, because it can of 'all others be the least prevented by manhood or 'forethought.' Yet Mr. Stephen thinks it most cruel that the colonial laws should condemn a poor slave for *only attempting* to poison his master and family.

As to what the learned gentleman says, that this penal law does not affect 'the white lawgiver,' or 'the privileged class,' the reader should recollect that the slave law was made for the slaves only; and if there had been occasion to make such a law for

the free population, it would not have been done by a clause in the slave code. The danger to be guarded against was not from free persons; but, though I am not a lawyer, as Mr. Stephen is, and must speak with diffidence on such matters, I am not aware that the slaves are in this particular put on a worse footing than free persons.*

Another part of the slave law which Mr. Stephen disapproves of, is the punishment of *obeah* with death; but he has not assigned his reasons for thinking that 'it has been, for the most part, the 'ground of a fanciful though fatal imputation on the 'poor slaves.' p. 305. The deaths which the obeah-men occasioned by working on the imaginations of their superstitious countrymen, *and by poison*, certainly were not 'fanciful,' whatever their pretended supernatural powers might be. Obeah.

I was present, some years ago, at the trial of a notorious obeah-man, driver on an estate in the parish of St. David, who, by the overwhelming influence he had acquired over the minds of his deluded victims, and the more potent means he had at command to accomplish his ends, had done great injury among the slaves on the property before it

* By the 43d Geo. III. c. 58, it is enacted, that 'if any person shall wilfully 'and maliciously administer to, or cause to be administered to, or taken by any of 'his Majesty's subjects, any deadly poison with intent to murder, he, his counsel-'lors, aiders, and abettors, shall be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy.' So the attempt to murder by poison, which, by the common law, was only a misdemeanor, is now made a capital crime.—*Christian's Notes to Blackstone's Commentaries*, vol. iv. p. 196.

was discovered. One of the witnesses, a negro belonging to the same estate, was asked—'Do you know the prisoner to be an obeah-man?' '*Ees,* '*massa, shadow-catcher, true.*' 'What do you mean 'by a shadow-catcher?' '*Him ha coffin,* (a little 'coffin produced,) *him set for catch dem shadow.*' 'What shadow do you mean?' '*When him set obeah* '*for summary* (somebody), *him catch dem shadow and* '*dem go dead*;' and too surely they were soon dead, when he pretended to have caught their shadows, by whatever means it was effected. Two other causes, besides the law, have contributed to make this now a crime of much less frequent occurrence, —the influence of Christianity, and the end put by the abolition to the importation of more African superstition. In a few years it will most likely be extinct; meantime, it is quite in consistency with Mr. Stephen's course towards the colonists, at one time to accuse them of leaving their slaves in ignorance and barbarism, and at another, to charge, as an act of severe oppression, a law which is calculated to put an end to the most fatal and destructive of their superstitions.

Perjury how punishable.

The constituting perjury a capital offence by the slave code is also represented as an act of cruelty, although the very principle that led to the enactment was humanity; so widely do the minds of men differ in considering such matters. The lawgivers of Jamaica, well knowing how grossly ignorant this class of people were, how little they could appreciate

the solemnity of an oath, and anxious to protect innocent life, conceived it humane to hold up every possible terror, against false swearing, and with this view made perjury a capital crime. Between their opinion and Mr. Stephen's let the world judge. I am not aware, however, that there has ever been a capital conviction under this law. The learned gentleman has reversed the object of the statute with an ingenuity worthy of a special pleader,—the evidence, says he, is to be hanged for swearing falsely *to save the prisoner*. In England, we are told, it has been deemed a defect in modern law that this offence is in no case punishable with death; to prevent, we presume, the lives of prisoners being *saved* by false swearing.

'Compassing or imagining the death of any white person' is another felony by the slave code, which attracts severe animadversion; and we can readily forgive Mr. S. here from a perfect conviction of his sincerity. It is altogether impossible *he* can think that a negro ought ever to suffer death for compassing or accomplishing the death of a 'petit blanc.' The sneer of derision intended by the appellations '*white monarchs*' and '*white majesties*,' here applied to the English colonists, is in the liberal spirit by which our author is distinguished. It must be confessed he is unrivalled in the art of calling names.

The section of the act which contains these words, '*compass or imagine the death of any white person, and declare the same by some overt act*,' speaks of rebellion, murder, robbery, &c., and enacts, that a slave who

shall be convicted of any of the crimes enumerated, 'shall suffer death, transportation, or such other pu-'nishment as the court shall think proper to direct, 'according to the nature and extent of the offence.' Does this necessarily imply 'that compassing or 'imagining the death of a white person, shall, in 'every case, be visited with a capital punishment?' Yet so by Mr. Stephen it is made to appear.

Discretionary power of the Judges in affixing punishment, how interpreted.

'Seventhly.—Slaves are liable still, I believe, by some of these insular laws, as they certainly very recently were, to cruel and shocking punishments, unknown to the law of England, and equally so, in respect of free persons, to that of the same colonies. In capital cases, they have, in certain islands, been liable to, and cruelly put to death by, the most dreadful modes of execution.' p. 308.

From the last part of this charge Jamaica is exempted by a law so clear and express, that no sophistry could cast even suspicion upon it, '*hanging* '*by the neck shall in future be the only mode of execu-*'*tion.*'

In affixing punishment to crimes, so much depends upon undefinable circumstances in the degrees of atrocity, or otherwise, that some discretionary power must generally be left with the judges, to be used as they may see occasion;—such has been the case in all countries. That this discretionary power was granted, and is always used, for the purpose of mitigating the severity of the law, as circumstances may render just and expedient, scarcely need be observed; but Mr. Stephen, with his usual ingenuity and candour, reverses its object and application in the colo-

nies, and upon this most palpable perversion founds a charge against the colonists of such horrible atrocity that one absolutely shudders at the perusal of it. 'I have already,' says he, 'incidentally noticed acts 'of Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Jamaica, and other 'islands, by which slitting the nose, cutting off the 'ears and feet, and other dismemberments, have been 'expressly directed or authorized, either as fixed or 'discretionary punishments, for various crimes, and 'sometimes for petty misdemeanors; nay, *even for 'actions in their nature innocent;* and other instances 'of the same kind might be cited from the printed 'laws of our colonies; *though the more ordinary and 'prudent course has been to cover such barbarous inten-'tions by general words; giving a discretionary power to 'the justices of the peace,* before whom the slave is 'convicted, to sentence him to death, or *such other* 'punishment as they shall think fit.' p. 308.

Malice and calumny can go no further. The plain English of this is, the colonists dare not avow it; but they slit open the noses, they cut out the tongues, they chop off the ears and the feet, and the other members of their slaves, for mere pleasure, or 'for actions in their nature perfectly innocent!' Mr. S. makes this most unchristian accusation, knowing, as he must, that no laws, directing or authorizing mutilation or dismemberment as a punishment, now exist in the colonies, and that mutilations are in fact as much unknown there as in England. To the best of

my belief, there is not a single instance of a mutilated person to be found in Jamaica; at all events, I have never seen nor heard of any such. I blush to think it should be necessary for me to say so in England.

That instances of harsh punishment may sometimes take place in the colonies, will be admitted; but that there exists any general disposition to severity even, still less to cruelty, is certainly not true; and when a whole class of men are thus represented as treating their fellow-creatures and humble dependents with an atrocity which the human heart is incapable of exercising even to the brute creation, prejudice, blind prejudice itself, must sink under a representation so utterly incredible.

Character of the colonists given by Mr. Stephen.

In reading such charges, we should hope that many would feel inclined to apply to the companions of their youth now in the colonies, the lines addressed to Warren Hastings by an old schoolfellow of his:

> 'HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
> While young, humane, conversable, and kind;
> Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
> Now grown a villain, and the worst of men;
> But rather some suspect, who have opprest
> And worried thee, as not themselves the best.
>
> *Cowper.*

It seems, indeed, to have occurred to Mr. Stephen himself, that there was some difficulty attending the belief, that educated and humane Englishmen should

undergo a transmutation in the colonies as wonderful as that produced by the magician,

> ——————— 'whose pleasing poison
> The visage quite transform'd of him that drank
> Into the inglorious likeness of a beast.'

But *he* is not staggered by the difficulty. He goes on to say:

'The fault was highly aggravated in them by the liberal and merciful principles of jurisprudence which had been handed down to them by their ancestors, and by the national spirit of humanity, of which those principles are either the offspring or the parents. They had to vanquish early impressions and habits on the virtuous side, before they could reconcile themselves to such spectacles of horror as these opprobrious laws provided.' p. 315.

Their early impressions and habits, he admits then, were on the side of virtue; and they must have forgotten the lessons of their fathers; they must have lost the characteristic manners of their country; they must in fact have ceased to be Englishmen, before they could have imbibed such principles, or have been guilty of such atrocious acts as he ascribes to them. To the impartial public they may, like himself, appeal, and say, '*Fathers and fellow countrymen, is this 'thing possible?*'

Trial of Slaves upon criminal accusations.

'Sect. VII.—Slaves are prosecuted and tried upon criminal accusations, in a manner grossly inconsistent with the humanity of English laws, and highly dangerous to the safety of the innocent.' p. 315.

The following report of the proceedings of a slave court, taken from the Royal Gazette, Jamaica, will

be the best comment on this assertion; and will shew the reader in what manner the slaves are prosecuted and tried upon criminal accusations, without being guided either by Mr. Stephen's authority or mine:

'JAMAICA.

'*Montego Bay, May* 2, 1823.

'ST. JAMES'S QUARTER SESSIONS.

'The court of Quarter Sessions for this parish commenced on Tuesday last, before Samuel Vaughan, John Coates, Geo. Gordon, and John E. Payne, Esqrs.

* * * * *

At three o'clock the Court of Quarter Sessions was closed, and the Slave Court opened. The following trial took place:

'The KING *v.* BILLY, belonging to Childermas estate, for being an incorrigible run-away—acquitted.

'The Court adjourned to Wednesday.

'On Wednesday, the Court met at nine o'clock, when the following trials took place:

'The KING *v.* NICHOLAS, belonging to Flamstead estate, the property of the heirs of Samuel Vaughan, Esq., deceased, for being an incorrigible run-away. He was found guilty; but being very young, the court, in hope of reclaiming him, sentenced him to twelve months' hard labour in the workhouse.

'The KING *v.* ISAAC, belonging to the same property, an incorrigible run-away, was found guilty; and being otherwise of bad character, he was sentenced to be transported for life. Mr. Vaughan being interested in the above two negroes, did not preside at their trials. Having resumed his seat,

'Robert, alias Robert M'Kellar, was put into the dock, charged with the murder, of Cargill Mowat, Esq., to which he pleaded Not guilty.

'The jury, consisting of the following gentlemen, were sworn: John H. Hay, Esq.; John Hilton, Esq.; H. Gray M'Pherson, Esq.; Charles Rob, merchant; J. Tulloch, Esq.; Thos. Watson,

merchant; Thomas Excell, gent.; John T. Anderson, gent.; J. Mollison, planter; A. Dingwall, Mason; A. Dewar, ditto; B. M'Millan, carpenter.

'The indictment being read,—

'Mr. Grignon inquired if the owner of Robert had been served with notice?

'Mr. Jackson contended that there was no necessity for a notice to the owner; it was a general gaol-delivery, and not a special slave court; but to save trouble, notice was produced with admission of service by J. Stewart. Mr. Grignon took another objection, and insisted the hand-writing of J. Stewart should be proved, as it might be a forgery. W. P. Walker proved the hand-writing.

'Mr. Jackson addressed the jury in a very able and well-arranged speech, commenting on the evidence which he was instructed he should be able to adduce; that the evidence was altogether presumptive, as there was no one who saw him commit the act; but the chain was so complete, that it left not the smallest room to doubt. But if there had, his own confessions, which he made in more instances than one, would completely establish the fact. The witnesses were then called.

'Dr. Gordon sworn.—Deposed to his having been called in, with Mr. Downer, to where Mr. Mowat was lying; he was not dead, but no pulse was perceptible. As the stocking of the deceased appeared to have been torn, the shoe off, the ancle rubbed, he thought he had been thrown from his horse, which he gave as his opinion to the coroner's inquest.

'Mr. Thomas James Bernard sworn.—Deposed to his finding Mr. Mowat lying speechless on the road, and the apparent indifference of Mr. Mowat's negroes.

'Thomas Cawley, carpenter on Anchovy Bottom estate, sworn.—Saw the prisoner at the bar at Anchovy Bottom on the 25th February; prisoner asked deponent to wind up his watch for him; the watch is the same now in court. He knows it, having remarked that the hour-hand was very close the dial-plate. Asked prisoner where he got it, who answered, that he purchased it for a doubloon and a half in Kingston. Wound it up, and gave it back to him. He said, of his own accord, that he had just come from Rock Pleasant

(Mr. Mowat's place); he was not dead when he left it, but would be so by that time.

'R. F. Downer, Esq., sworn.—He is uncle of the deceased. Knows the watch; it was Mr. Mowat's, and had been his father's. The seal was given to Mr. Mowat by his sister. Purse produced. Deposed as to the purse being Mr. M.'s, but would not be positive. Knife produced. Knows it to be Mr. Mowat's.

'Hyacinth Cunniffe sworn.—Is overseer of Cornwall estate. He deposed as to his apprehending Robert at Cornwall. Saw him with the watch; put him in the stocks, and sent him in the evening to the workhouse.

'William Wiggan Ball sworn.—Was present when prisoner came to the workhouse; he had been there twice last year. He said to the prisoner, "Well, I see they have brought you back here for "your fun" (meaning tricks). Prisoner answered, "I can't help it. "I know what I have done now; I shall be hanged for it." He told his father what the prisoner had said.

'Catherine Campbell, the hothouse (hospital) woman at Cornwall, having been examined as to her knowledge of the nature of an oath, gave satisfactory answers, and was sworn. Deposed that prisoner gave her the watch, and told her never to part with it, she must hide it, and never let any one know of it. When he was put into the stocks she offered him the watch back, but he would not take it. 'Fortune, who took the prisoner to the workhouse, came back to Cornwall, and said they would not pay him for taking up prisoner unless she gave up the watch. She gave it up. Saw prisoner with the purse; saw him tear it up, and put it into a hole; while in the bilboes she took it up, and gave it with the watch to Mr. Crerar.

'Mr. Downer called up by the Jury. "You stated that you were "with Dr. Gordon to view the body: Did it occur to you to look for "the watch?" "It did; I looked for it immediately, and missed it."

'Sydney, a negro belonging to Mr. Mowat.—Saw the prisoner on the morning the accident happened to her master. Saw him with a hatchet in his hand; said he had done the job, but did not know what job he meant. Says, prisoner had the impudence to say William Buchanan gave him the hatchet to do the job.

'William Buchanan, belonging to Mr. M., says, he met prisoner on the morning of the accident. Saw him with the hatchet; knew

it to be his own. Does not know how the prisoner got it. Prisoner told him he had done the job, but that he had not chopped him; he must never use the hatchet again. Took notice of prisoner's clothes; his knee had blood on it, and was dirty. Prisoner was sweating; his frock was bloody. The hatchet produced is the same he had; marks of blood upon the hatchet. Prisoner had Mr. M.'s watch at the time, and his purse. He did not ask him any questions, as he was afraid of him. As he knew he is of a very violent temper, he suspected he had been doing mischief to his master.

'Stella, a negro belonging to Mr. Mowat, says, she heard Sidney and Flora talking to prisoner about their master over night. Heard prisoner, next morning, say that he had met with Mr. Mowat, whose horse was plaguing him; that he asked prisoner to hold his horse. That prisoner asked him if he knew who he was talking to last night? Her master answered, Yes! That then prisoner said he struck him with the hatchet; that Mr. M. called out, 'Do, my good negro, don't 'kill me.' Ellen said, 'Aye, he will know now who is his good 'negro.'

'W. B. Walker sworn.—Knife produced is the one he took from the prisoner.

'G. C. Ricketts sworn.—Was present at the confession of the prisoner; he was advised not to say any thing to criminate himself, but he persisted. The confession was taken down at the time.

'Thomas Philpotts, Esq., sworn.—Took down the confession of prisoner; is in Mr. Philpotts' hand-writing. Advised him not to make it, as it might injure him, but could not be of any advantage to him at his trial. He persisted in confessing.

'Case closed on the part of the crown.

'Mr. Grignon, in defence of the prisoner, commented on the evidence at great length, and quoted the maxim, that it is better for ninety-nine offenders to go unpunished than one innocent person to suffer.

'The court summed up the evidence as follows:—

'The court, in its charge, said, the law had been very ably laid down, and the evidence was very full and clear; and nothing was left to the court but to make remarks and comparisons on certain parts of the evidence.

'There is no direct proof of Robert, or any person, having committed the murder; and if he is guilty, the proof rested on circumstantial evidence and his confession.

'The first consideration is, whether there were any predisposing causes to incline the prisoner to commit an act of violence on Mr. Mowat, and there were many very strong ones. That Mr. Mowat turned him off his property; his violent temper; his being accessary to a conspiracy which had existed among Mr. Mowat's negroes, and the appeal made to him; and the unwillingness shown by Sidney, one of the conspirators, to give evidence, &c.

'The next consideration is, what was the cause of Mr. Mowat's death? The medical gentleman had supposed it may be the consequence of a fall from his horse, and his being dragged; but he would not account precisely for the accumulation of blood in his neck, and for that which came from his body. Both, however, are clearly accounted for, and to have arisen from personal violence, by the prisoner's confession, which states that a blow with a hatchet was given on the back, and another on the side. It stated also, Mr. Mowat was attached to the horse and dragged, to give the appearance of his death being occasioned in that way.

'The last question is, whether the guilt of the act attaches to the prisoner? This is made probable, and supported by his possessing all his property, such as his pocket-book, watch, purse, and knife, and also the hatchet, which was the instrument of his death; it is also supported by the blood and dirt on his clothes.

'The court stated, that if there was a doubt of the evidence of Mr. Mowat's negroes, there was none in regard to the correctness of that from persons at Cornwall estate, from Mr. Ball, and of part of his confessions.

'The court further stated, that Robert's confession must be viewed with indulgence; but it must be admitted to full credit, when corroborated by other evidence, which it was in most material points, while the object of the confession was evidently to throw guilt on another. That part stating the hiding of the hatchet is clearly false, and much against the prisoner.

'The court gave it as their opinion, that the circumstantial evidence was conclusive, and that he was guilty of murder.

'The Jury, without leaving the box, returned a verdict of Guilty.

'The presiding judge then passed the following sentence:—That the said negro-man slave, Robert, *alias* Robert M'Kellar, be taken from hence to the goal from whence he came, and from thence to be taken to the place of execution, on the day and time to be appointed by his Grace the Governor, and there be hanged by the neck until he be dead.

'The trial lasted upwards of six hours, and a more patient investigation could not have been had. We have seldom witnessed a more hardened villain than the prisoner; his situation seemed not to have made any impression on him, and he was laughing a considerable part of the time. He has, since his trial, made a full confession of his guilt, and accuses the greater part of Mr. Mowat's people as being accessary before the murder; acknowledges he deserves his fate, but it is hard to be hanged by himself, as they are equally guilty.'

Let the reader, after perusing the above document, turn to Mr. Stephen:—

'The proceedings against slaves in all cases, capital as well as others, *are wholly by parol;* except that the warrant or mandate for execution is, I think, generally put in writing; and except that when the slave is not in custody, and the master does not send him to be tried, an arrest warrant is granted.' p. 317.

So absolutely unfounded is this, *that in all capital trials of slaves in Jamaica, the evidence and whole proceedings, not only must be put in writing, but a copy of them must by law* (except in cases of rebellion) *be forwarded to the Governor;* who, it is understood, submits them to the consideration of the Attorney-General, and afterwards grants warrant for execution, or commutes the sentence, as he may think proper.

It may be asked, if any freeman of England could have the means of a fair trial better secured to him? Yet, according to Mr. Stephen,

'Slaves are prosecuted and tried upon criminal accusations in a manner grossly inconsistent with the humanity of English laws, and highly dangerous to the safety of the innocent,' nay, 'the convicting and hanging a negro in the West Indies, is, in general, a matter of as little solemnity and circumspection, as the recovering a debt under forty shillings at a court of requests in this country!' p. 317.

Having thus conjured up a case of fanciful and frightful oppression, he proceeds:—

'Great and obvious are the dangers which may arise to innocent men, from precipitate trials on loose verbal accusations, and from sentences which are not even reduced into writing before they are carried into effect. Yet in this loose and hazardous way is criminal justice administered in the British West Indies against the unfortunate negroes,' p. 318.

In the conclusion of this section, Mr. S. observes:—

'It cannot reasonably be demanded, that I should *adduce proofs* of iniquitous consequences having actually resulted from these loose and summary proceedings. Where, not only the evidence, but the charge, and the conviction itself are unrecorded, and where *no reports of trials at law are published,* it is obvious that a thousand innocent men might be convicted against law and evidence, and yet no proofs be attainable, by which a single case of that kind could be established on this side of the Atlantic.' p. 319.

We cannot doubt that he will feel greatly obliged to us for aiding him to a report, and that it will be a further satisfaction to him to be informed that such reports of trials at law are quite common in the Jamaica newspapers. How he happens, to be so fully acquainted with workhouse lists published in those papers, and with all the severe laws now obsolete, and at the same time

so ignorant of the common and every-day practice of the courts, is not a little surprising. But Mr. Stephen is a Christian, and whatever may be his zeal in the cause he advocates, has so often joined in fervent response to the sacred precept, '*Thou shalt not 'bear false witness against thy neighbour*,' that there is difficulty in believing he would knowingly swerve from the truth, even to carry his point against the colonists; more especially when we observe how he speaks in his preface of 'the infamy due to false accusers.'

'Sect. VIII.—The slave, when prosecuted as a criminal, is deprived of that protection which he might naturally derive from the master's regard to self-interest, and is sometimes even punished for his master's crimes.' p. 322.

Protection the Slaves have in the self-interest of their masters.

Under this extraordinary charge, the following is all that has reference to Jamaica:—

'When a slave is condemned to death by the civil magistrate, he is, previous to his execution, appraised, and the value, not exceeding a limited sum, is allowed and paid to his owner, out of the public treasury of the island. The reason commonly given for this regulation, and which, I think, is recited in some of the acts that establish it, is, that masters, if not indemnified for the loss of their property, would not give up their slaves to public justice, but rather assist them in escaping from it, when accused of capital crimes.' p. 323.

This, Mr. S. admits, might often be found true, but attributes the evil to a defect in the criminal laws, when directed against white persons, which, in his opinion, might make the master's authority adminis-

ter to, rather than oppose, that of the civil magistrate.

Indemnification to the owners of condemned Slaves.

In theory every thing is easy. No sooner is an evil discovered than a remedy is at hand. In practice, unfortunately, it is quite the reverse: we find ourselves called upon to decide a question beset with difficulties, and must be content with adopting that course which appears upon the whole to be the best. Here is exactly such a case. The island of Jamaica could have no inducement to tax its treasury with such a charge for condemned criminal slaves, were it not considered necessary for the public safety. To allow full value for them would be impolitic and inhumane, as giving the master less interest, not only in watching over the conduct of his slaves so as to prevent them from transgressing the law, but also in protecting them when charged with having transgressed it. On the other hand, it is but reasonable that the person whose individual property is sacrificed to public justice, should have some compensation from the public treasury, otherwise, it is evident that self-interest, joined to a feeling of attachment to his servant, would, unless in very atrocious cases, induce him rather to connive at the escape, than aid in the detection, of the culprit. Between these extremes the legislature of Jamaica has chosen a middle course. It authorizes the jury which tries a criminal slave, before leaving the box, to appraise him when condemned; and in capital cases, the compensation may extend to 100*l.* currency; in all others

it is limited to 50*l.*, although the negro may be worth three times that amount.

Under these regulations, it is evident the master must always be a loser by the condemnation of his slave; and that consequently he will protect him on that account, as well as from a feeling of regard to one entirely dependant upon him, unless his conduct has been so notoriously bad as to have forfeited all those claims, and rendered it necessary to abandon him to public justice as an example to others. Such are the grounds upon which Mr. Stephen has founded his charge, that a slave, when prosecuted as a criminal, is deprived of that protection which he might naturally derive from his master's regard to self-interest. It is very true that, if no compensation were given for a condemned criminal slave, the master would have a stronger interest in protecting him from the law and aiding in his escape; but will Mr. S. say that society would be benefited? that the negroes themselves would be benefited by such a course? I suspect not; but then it forms no part of his object to give the *fair interpretation* of this or any other law.

Obsolete laws, how used by Mr. S.

There is no other charge under this section that applies to Jamaica. To give it a proper seasoning of the horrible, as usual, a barbarous law of Barbadoes, passed in 1688, one hundred and thirty-six years ago, and confessedly long obsolete, is introduced: and with sufficient ingenuity made to read so, that a person not particularly attentive or unacquainted with the subject, would suppose he is read-

ing of a law actually in force, and not in the little island of Barbadoes only, but in the whole of the British West India colonies. This, to be sure, is about as fair and reasonable as it would be to make the present administration of Great Britain the subject of obloquy, for the arbitrary measures which the government was guilty of, and which led to the abdication of James II. much about the same time that this often-quoted act of Barbadoes was passed.

Old and obsolete laws.

'SECT. IX.—Concluding reflections on the subject of this chapter.' p. 328.

Conscious of the just charge which would be brought against him for bringing forward *old and obsolete laws* in a treatise on the *present* state of slavery, it is amusing to see our author arguing the point with himself, as if he had already heard the merited accusation: —

'Can, then, the obvious consequences be avoided by suggesting that the cruel and iniquitous laws which have been noticed are all of ancient date? and that the laws themselves have been repealed? I believe the fact to be, that in many of our colonies the greater part of the acts cited in this chapter still continue in force; and there were many equally bad in Jamaica, which, though now repealed, were in force so *recently* as 1787; and then reprinted in the island as existing laws, after a temporary suspension. Nor is it true that they are *all* of an early date,' &c. p. 331.

National humanity of Englishmen of how old a date.

A question is here started by Mr. Stephen, whether or not the humanity of our national manners be of so old a date as the settlement of our West India islands; in discussing which question, a considera-

tion seems never to have occurred to him, which is surely very important — that our ancestors, and even our grandfathers and fathers, made laws for a different state of society from that now existing. When those sanguinary laws were passed, it should be recollected that the colonies were inundated with hordes of Africans, inured to blood in their own country, and that a mere handful of white people had to keep them in subjection. Self-defence is the first law of nature, and the laws of that period can be judged of only by a competent knowledge of the state of society for which they were made, and what that was, Mr. S., I presume, is as ignorant as myself. With sufficient ingenuity, however, he makes those obsolete and (as to us they appear) cruel laws a double-edged tool to cut at the past and the present; he brings them forward a century and a half to condemn us; he carries back the present meliorated state of society, and they condemn our forefathers.

In a violent philippic against the Assemblies, the learned gentleman incidentally mentions that they are elected *annually*. p. 331. This harmless error, with his ignorance of the reports of criminal trials, may enable the reader to judge what credit is due to a man so well informed on colonial matters. What would be thought in England of a French author, who, abusing the British nation and its parliament, should put it in his book that the parliament, being *annually elected*, may be considered 'a fair mirror,' in

which the worthless and depraved character of the people may be seen?

Slaves in Jamaica kindly treated and happy.

Having now arrived at the conclusion of this chapter, in which misrepresentation and calumny have been carried to lengths, which no man could have dared to have done, but from an idea that, the subject being so little known, any thing he might say upon it, however fabulous, would be believed; I turn with pleasure from such a horrid but happily unfounded picture of savage oppression, satiating itself with flagellations, mutilations, and innocent blood, to view Jamaica, not as Mr. Stephen has depicted it, but as my own eyes have seen it.

Slavery, like every human institution, has a fair side as well as a dark, and to form a just estimate of it must be viewed on both — must be viewed in its enjoyments as well as its hardships. Every master must resist—he must punish, the crimes of his slaves; but these, happily, are not of frequent occurrence; and, as the performance of this duty is in the last degree painful, (for what can be more so than the cries of a wretch suffering under punishment, however great may have been his crime?) is it to be believed that he will seek occasions for it, or not rather that he will pass it over, unless in cases where really necessary for the good of the culprit himself, and as an example to others. Authority must be upheld — discipline must be maintained — and I will concede that there may be occasional acts of unjustifiable se-

verity; but there are cases also where slaves are injured by weak and ill-timed lenity on the part of masters, threatening and forgiving, forgiving and threatening, till such vicious and destructive habits are acquired as prove in the end fully as injurious to the slaves as to their master. Among the ignorant in this country a very general idea prevails, that an European residing in the colonies will become black; a scarcely less absurd idea prevails among their betters, that he will become a brute in disposition. The truth, however, is, that Englishmen in the colonies are much the same as Englishmen at home —

'Cœlum, non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt,'—

and, in the exercise of their authority over the negroes, speaking generally, there is no improper harshness or severity. Is it to be believed, that on the plantations of Jamaica, one white man could maintain authority over fifty black, if there existed any thing like that kind of oppression and cruelty which has been most falsely represented? Not a living creature exists but will resist if driven to desperation. I repeat it, the master must punish when punishment is required; but is he to be viewed only in the performance of this painful but necessary part of his duty? Assuredly not; follow him in his usual avocations, and you will regard him rather as the father of a family; you will see him attending to the comforts and the wants of his people, with a degree of kindness and solicitude, which it would be vain and unreasonable in English labourers to expect

from masters, who have no farther interest in their welfare than the services of the passing day. You will see him in an evening taking a walk among the houses of his people, gratified to see them seated at their cheerful firesides, while a good supper (a chief meal with them) is preparing. On negro-days you will see him visiting them at their little farms, where each family is engaged by itself in its own concerns; the father and his elder children planting edoes, corn, or yams, or disencumbering the rich plantain and banana trees of their superabundant leaves, while the mother and young ones are roasting plantains under the shade of a tree.

Let a stranger but visit such a scene; let him contemplate the abundance they possess: see their laughing faces, and listen to their careless song, under the sunshine of a perpetual summer, and say if these are the people who, amidst the whole race of mankind, stand most in need of his commiseration; or let him witness, as the writer has often done, a group of little negro children running to meet their master on his return home after a few days' absence, clinging to the skirts of his coat, and vociferating the endearing expression, *Tata come, Tata come,* and say if here, of all places on earth, there is a want of sympathy between the master and servants.

That they are ignorant is true, but they possess many virtues, especially kindness to one another, from which more civilized life might take a useful lesson. They are slaves, but this happily gives

them no concern, as they have never known any other condition. Strangers to hunger and cold, the scourges of the poor in England, and equally so to the cares and anxieties which often perplex their masters, they are thoughtless, contented, and happy.*

'CHAPTER VI.—On this state of slavery in respect of its commencement and dissolution.' p. 334.

'SECT. I.—Reasons for this branch of the inquiry.

'II.—Of the sources from which slavery may originate.

'III.—Of penal slavery, or the state of servile convicts.' p. 337.

Remarks on the Registry Bill.

The two first of these sections are of a general nature, and, having no particular reference to the

* Mr. Dallas, of Jamaica, must have seen and felt this when he wrote the following verses so truly descriptive of the negro:—

What are the joys of white man here?
What are his pleasures? say;
Me want no joys, no ill me fear,
But on my bonja play.

Me sing all day, me sleep all night,
Me hab no care, my heart is light;
Me tink not what to-morrow bring,
Me happy, so me sing.

But white man's joys are not like mine,
Dho' he look smart and gay;
He proud, he jealous, haughty, fine,
While I my bonja play.

He sleep all day, he wake all night,
He full of care, his heart no light;
He great deal want, he little get,
He sorry, so he fret.

Me envy not dho white man dhen,
Me poor but me is gay;
Me glad at heart, me happy when
Me on my bonja play.

Me sing all day, me sleep all night,
Me hab no care, my heart is light;
Me tink not what to-morrow bring,
Me happy, so me sing.

West Indies, may be passed over. The third is principally occupied with an elaborate argument against a report of the Jamaica Assembly in 1815, when the colonies were threatened with a registry law by the British parliament, or rather by the African Institution through parliament. The agitation of this question was preceded by a manifesto from Mr. Stephen, under the title of *Reasons for Registry*, exceeding in abuse of the colonists any thing that had previously issued from the press, already groaning under reports of the African Institution and two-penny pamphlets on the oppression of the negroes. Yet the measure failed, and as there was, perhaps, next to the insurrection at Barbadoes, nothing that aided more in defeating this project of parliamentary interference with the internal affairs of the colonies (and the placing them, in fact, in the grasp of a hostile faction) than the able report transmitted from Jamaica, and laid before parliament, we can be at no loss to account for the special hostility it excited on the part of the anti-colonists.*

Colonial and Roman Slavery.

Against a charge by Mr. Stephen, in his *Reasons for Registry*, that the British colonial slavery exceeded in cruelty and oppression any thing ever

* This excellent report was drawn up by the late Mr. John Shand, to whom Jamaica was greatly indebted on that trying occasion, as on many others; he had the merit of introducing into the House of Assembly the meliorated Slave Code of 1816, so frequently referred to; and previously, a bill for extending important privileges to the free coloured population,—a measure of sound and liberal policy, reflecting the more honour on Mr. Shand, as there existed a strong prejudice against such concessions.

known in the world, this report instanced the slavery of the Romans as incomparably more cruel and oppressive. Mr. S. denies this, and through the whole of his ponderous volume palliates and justifies the Roman, while he exaggerates the severity of the British West India slave laws. Into these comparisons it has been no part of my purpose to enter, as leading into too great detail; but the following description of Roman slavery, from the pen of its apologist, is so much in point, and marks so strongly the difference between the two states, Roman and Colonial slavery, that I cannot resist giving it a place.

'In analogy to the inflictions by the public magistrate, the *paterfamilias*, or lord of the Roman household,' (in the West Indies *the slave-master*,) 'who had *judicial authority*,' (in the West Indies, *despotic power*,) 'over his slaves and children, even to the extent of capital punishments, established his *ergastulum*, a domestic prison and workhouse, and condemned his *criminal slaves*' (in the West Indies, *victims of oppression*) 'to such periods of confinement and penal labour in it as their offences seemed to him to deserve; adding, in heinous cases, stripes, or severer corporal punishments, and even death itself. On his domains in the country, the *ergastuli* were brought out in the daytime in their rural labours; *but, to denote their correctional state, and to prevent their escape*, they often wore chains or gyves on their legs.' p. 341.

Thus we see, on the authority of Mr. Stephen himself, that 'the lord of the Roman household' had an absolute and uncontrolled power over his slave; could punish him to any extent; work him in chains; even put him to death. The power of the master in our islands is limited to the infliction of thirty-nine

stripes; yet see how this impartial commentator can palliate when palliations will serve his purpose. If the Roman slave-master punished his slave, it was 'often, no doubt,' we are told, 'for offences which the civil magistrate would otherwise have taken notice of, and punished with death or the mines.' p. 341. Does Mr. S. not know that a West India master also often satisfies himself with the comparatively lenient punishment (which he can inflict) of thirty-nine stripes for a crime that would, if brought before the civil magistrate, subject the culprit to death, or send him to the Spanish mines? Oh, no! I had forgot, that blood-thirsty Englishmen in the colonies slit open the noses, cut off the ears, the feet, the hands, and other members of their slaves for 'petty misdemeanors—nay, even for actions in their nature innocent!'

Mr. Stephen is obliged to admit that there was a great number of chained labourers in Italy, but insists that they were the convicts of the public or *domestic tribunals*. p. 345. 'Domestic tribunals' is another of those fine phrases so tenderly and courteously appropriated to 'the lords of the Roman households.' In the West Indies, it would have been slave-owners, or 'petty despots.' The domestic tribunals of Jamaica, however, possess no such despotic powers, as Mr. Stephen well knows.

Work-houses.

From this he passes to the West India workhouses:

'Jamaica,' says he, 'if I mistake not, was the first of the British colonies that adopted these terrible slave-prisons, called workhouses, and the public or parochial slave-chains, which thirty years ago

were unknown in the Leeward Islands, and, as I believe, in all the Windward Islands we then possessed; but now the bad example has been followed at Antigua, St. Christopher, Grenada, Dominica, and Tobago, and perhaps in our other colonies. Their having been so long dispensed with in most of our islands is a pretty satisfactory proof that they cannot any where be necessary.' p. 354.

According to our author's usual custom, this is placing before the British public one side of the question, and keeping the other in the shade. Who would not rather that such establishments were abolished if they could be dispensed with? Not the colonists surely, to whom they are so heavy a burthen. Unfortunately, there is another point to be considered, upon which we shall be glad to have Mr. Stephen's counsel:—what is to be done with the criminals? He has said that thirty years ago workhouses were unknown in the Leeward Islands, but he has not said if crime was happily then unknown also, or how the criminals were disposed of;—a very essential piece of information one would think, to enable a man of sober reason to form an opinion, whether those establishments are injurious or beneficial to the wretches condemned to them. If hard labour is between them and death or banishment to the Spanish mines, it is surely the most merciful of the three. But it is enough for Mr. S. if a prejudice can be excited against the colonists, by depicting and commiserating all the hardships incident not only to slavery, but even to crime itself, from the punishment of which it would seem that negroes ought alone in the world to be exempted.

Branding of Slaves.

The next charge is the practice which once existed of marking newly-imported Africans, of course now obsolete, but not likely to be soon obsolete as a weapon against the colonists. — Among all the various means made use of to prejudice the minds of the British public against their countrymen in the colonies, perhaps there is none where misrepresentation has been carried farther than with regard to this practice. Granting that it had its origin in self-interest, humanity was also promoted by it; a newly-imported African occasionally wandered away and lost himself, or was seduced away by others; and when taken up and committed, as frequently happened, to some distant workhouse, being of course unable to speak English, he could give no account of himself by which it was possible for his master to identify him in a public advertisement; and the consequence was, not only his loss to the owner, but, which was more important to humanity, it separated him for ever from his shipmates and friends, and from a permanent and comfortable home on a plantation, and placed him in the possession of one of those low characters who are most commonly the purchasers of workhouse slaves.

Such was the origin of a practice which has been represented as a flagrant outrage of humanity. The manner of affixing the mark was simply this: the place chosen (generally the back of the shoulder) was touched with olive oil; the initial letters, formed of silver upon a plate about the size of the head of a silver pencil or small seal, were then heated with

spirit of wine, and the slightest possible touch upon the oil left an impression, without injuring the skin. All was the work of a moment, and occasioned no more pain than the prick of a pin or the bite of a leech. Yet this has been called branding the slaves with red-hot irons, like cattle! Nor has the charge been limited to the fact, that newly-imported Africans only were thus marked; it has been obstinately maintained in the face of truth that the practice is universal.

The native, or creole negroes of Jamaica are not, and never were marked, with the exception of such incorrigible wandering vagrants as it is impossible to keep at home. The number of these is small; but I admit that I consider it a defect in the laws, which I hope will be soon remedied, that even the marking of these should now be permitted unless by order of a court. Arguing from the workhouse lists, we see it stoutly maintained in the English prints, that 'branding with a red-hot iron' is customary, nay universal; and if the slaves in workhouses were a fair criterion, the inference no doubt would be, that the majority are marked; but to form a conclusion concerning the whole negro population from those in the workhouses, is just as absurd as it would be to judge of the people of England from the unhappy wretches that crowd their houses of correction.

There is another view Mr. Stephen takes of the now obsolete practice of marking Africans: 'The 'reproach of it,' says he, 'consists not so much in 'the pain of branding, which, though not inconsider-

'able, may be brief, as in the coarse and contemp-
'tuous affront thus offered to the sacred human form,
'by stamping upon it an unsightly and indelible re-
'cord of a degraded and ignominious condition.
p. 349.

On this it is only necessary to observe, that it was done under no imputation of crime, and therefore attached no disgrace. The 'sacred form' of the African had already been degraded by such an unsightly and indelible record of his savage condition, that it would require no small stretch of credulity to believe that he could be particularly sensible to this very slight additional mark on his already tattooed skin. In truth he had no such feelings. The case is now altered: bad characters only are marked; and it is consequently felt as a degradation.

In some notes to this section, Mr. Stephen censures the Jamaica Assembly for fallaciously holding out the treatment of the *ergastuli* (or workhouse-slaves) 'as a picture of Roman slavery in general;' and with admirable consistency, in the very next page, holds out the treatment of the workhouse slaves in Jamaica as a picture of West India slavery in general. pp. 348, 349.

Sources of Slavery, and illegal importation of Slaves.

'SECT. IV.—Sources of private Slavery, properly so called.' p. 358.

In this section, our author *presumes* that the Polish peasant may now leave the estate, though born in servitude upon it: lays it down as certain that the slavery which formerly existed in England 'had

'but ONE source, the immemorial servile condition 'of all the paternal ancestors;' yet forthwith speaks of another source, 'the villein's confession in a court of record.' Next comes 'the mild species of slavery' which exists in Hindostan, and has *fifteen* different sources; then the slavery of the African hordes very learnedly treated; Mr. Park accused of inaccuracy; and cases stated, in which 'it is very doubtful 'whether the law of Africa is not misconceived and 'abused.' Very likely; and we shall not waste the reader's time with a discussion of presumptions, surmises, and conjectures.

The importance of having a registry of slaves established in the colonies by act of parliament, is next enlarged on; and those acts which the Assemblies have passed for the purpose, are represented as ineffectual.

The object contemplated by registration was to put an end to the illegal importation of Africans, with which, among the many false accusations brought against them, the colonists were charged; and the legislature of Jamaica, contrary to its own better judgment, was prevailed upon, at the earnest desire of government and the friends of the colony in England, and under a promise of no further interference, to pass a law for having the slaves registered every third year. This law costs the island, triennially, the sum of 10,000*l.*, besides a great deal of trouble, especially to the coloured class. They have first to go to the Registry Office (often at a considerable distance) to procure a printed

form; then to some white person to fill it up for them; then to a Magistrate to swear to it; and, lastly, they must carry it back to the Parish Registry Office to be recorded: and if there happens to be any informality, as is not uncommon, all this is to do over again. And for what purpose was all this expense and trouble incurred? To abolish an evil which had no existence! Scarcely ten years have elapsed since the indignation of the country was loud and vehement against the colonies for this alleged violation of the abolition-law. Now we do not hear a word on the subject; the falsehood of the charge has become so notorious, that even the Edinburgh Review has, in a late Number, been obliged to confess it.* Let it be hoped that time will dispel many of the other prejudices against the English colonists which are equally unfounded.

It has been stated, as one of the good effects of the registry law, that it has increased the revenue of Jamaica. True, it has compelled a great number of poor people, principally of colour, who own a few slaves, to make returns of them to the parish vestries, which they previously did not, and has thus subjected them to the poll-tax. But what proportion does the increase of revenue, thus acquired, bear to the total expense of registration?

* Who doubts the activity of *individuals* in this country, were the constituted authorities to slumber? Yet what instances of slave-trading have been brought to light? One outlawry and two convictions, we believe, are all that have been tried in England since the traffic was made a felony; and no one has ever pretended that the act of 1811 is evaded. No. 81, p. 201.

'SECT. V.—Of the sources of Slavery in the British colonies.' p. 364. Sources of Slavery.

After tracing English slavery or villeinage to its source, 'the immemorial servile condition of all 'the paternal ancestors;' after expatiating on the origin of this state in Europe, Asia, and the unexplored regions of Africa, our author passes to the origin of slavery in the British colonies, and repeats what he has again and again stated, that no act of assembly has expressly declared in what manner slavery shall originate. But neither has he told us of any act of parliament in England, by which it was declared that villeinage should originate 'from the 'immemorial servile condition of all the paternal 'ancestors;' or, indeed, of an act of the legislature of any country, declaring how this state should originate; yet surely such an act must have been more necessary in countries where slavery did originate, than in Jamaica, where it exists it is true, but never did, and never can, originate. There, as in other places, the state is hereditary, and passes to the descendants of African slaves; but there is no law by which a freeman, whether white, black, or brown, can possibly be made a slave.

The original stock, it is well known, had been purchased in Africa by English merchants, and were by them carried to the colonies and sold. But the blame, it seems, is due to the colonists (always the greatest offenders) for not ascertaining that the African title was good. A court of equity established

in a Guinea-yard in the West Indies, to hear and decide on the titles to the slaves brought in, would certainly have been a novelty in judicature, from the variety of tongues in which the proceedings must necessarily have been carried on, and from the circumstance that every question at issue must have been decided by the evidence of the parties themselves, the English ship-master and his cargo; and even if all these difficulties could have been overcome, would England have acknowledged the right of 'a Charibbean island' to exclude commodities, which, according to her laws, were legal?

The Colonists are falsely accused of reducing free persons to slavery.

As already mentioned, no act of assembly is to be found in any of the colonies, by which a free man can be made a slave. But Mr. S. tells us, that 'without any act of assembly, usage and popular 'opinion, received in the colonial courts as law, 'have established these comprehensive maxims; 'that no white person can, by any means whatever, 'be reduced to slavery; and that every man, woman, 'and child, whose skin is black, or whose mother, 'grandmother, or great-grandmother, was of that 'complexion, shall be presumed to be a slave, unless 'the contrary can be proved.' p. 364.

It is true, no white person can, by any means whatever, be reduced to slavery in Jamaica; no free person, whether white, black, or brown, can be reduced to slavery. But there is a slight distinction, for as there never was a white slave in Jamaica, there cannot well be a presumption against an unknown

white person that he is a runaway slave, however liable a black vagrant may be to such a suspicion.*

He adds, 'that by various acts of assembly in different islands, *unknown* negroes and mulattoes, and persons of that unfortunate race who have committed or are suspected of any offence against the police, are liable to be apprehended and kept in gaol, without even the warrant of a magistrate; and unless they are claimed within a limited time by some owner, who can prove them to be his property, or they themselves can produce legal evidence of their freedom, they are publicly sold by the Provost Marshal, whose bill of sale is a valid and unimpeachable title.' p. 368. 'And that free negroes are in fact often deprived of their liberty by proceedings under these unjust and tyrannical laws, *there is abundant reason to believe.*' p. 369.

The laws thus misrepresented are certain police regulations, necessary to protect property and preserve the peace of the country, as I shall presently shew; but I would first propose to Mr. S. the following questions: If there exists among the English colonists such a disposition to reduce to slavery every man, woman, and child, with a black or coloured skin, who are one and all the offspring of slaves, how did these people ever happen to be free? If they or their parents were, without any compulsory law, emancipated by the whites, is it credible that, while the whites were thus emancipating them on the one

* 'How unjust, how abominable, that men should be kept in bondage *merely on account of their colour!*' is the cry of many ignorant persons, as if the Africans had been slaves in their own country because they were black; as if the trade in African slaves had been encouraged by parliament because they were black; or the colonists had ever had *white* slaves, and had emancipated these, while they kept the negro in bondage, because he was black. As well might they say that Englishmen are free, because they are white; or that they are more civilized and refined than the Africans, because they are white.

hand, they were wrongfully enslaving them on the other? Let our author explain this inconsistency; let him also account for the fact no less at variance with his assertions, that the number of free persons of colour in the island, stated by B. Edwards, in 1788, at 10,000, has now increased, as appears from Stewart's View of Jamaica, published in 1823, to 35,000, and, I believe, to nearer 40,000.

These facts certainly do not appear to accord with the charge against the colonists; but perhaps they will explain the reason why in support of it Mr. S. and his friends do not adduce a single case of a free person having been reduced to slavery in the colonies, and are obliged to let the accusation rest on, 'there is abundant reason to believe.'*

* I had formerly occasion to mention an idea entertained by the African negroes, that false swearing may bring some disease or temporal calamity upon them, but that their having *a broken rial* in their mouth, when giving evidence, is a charm to prevent it; and I cannot help noticing here that, as human nature is every where pretty much the same, there exists a practice very similar to this in our own country, where some persons have a way of advancing the most unwarranted charges against those they wish to injure, only using the precaution to have an *I think*, or *I fear*, in their mouth, as a salvo or *broken rial*. Thus our author, speaking of the black troops disbanded in the West Indies, says, 'They have been taken up and sent to 'prison as run-away slaves, and have been sold, I FEAR, in many cases, upon the 'presumption of law arising from their colour, because they could not, within the 'short time limited by those laws, make proof of their freedom.' p. 427.

It is easy to recognise the broken rial here; and an attentive reader of the work from which the quotation is taken, cannot fail to observe other instances of the use of it, and that it is a figure admirably calculated to serve the purposes of such an author. The next *soi disant* 'friend of humanity,' or 'advocate of the slaves,' quotes the assertion, forgetting or omitting the rial, which, indeed, many careless readers will overlook. Thus the lie gets into circulation, and the purpose of its author is attained.

Mr. S. complains, in his Preface, of certain calumnies touching himself and his son; and it is not unamusing to see how vehemently indignant a man who is so liberal of abuse to others can be, if but a hair of *his own* head is touched. Regard-

In an island like Jamaica, containing 320,000 slaves, it is very evident there will be criminals, and, as in all other communities (not excepting England itself,) a number of indolent, profligate, and improvident beings, who, if they can help it, will do nothing either for themselves or for others. Slaves of this description are of course prone to desertion; and the extent of uncultivated country, and means of supporting themselves in it, are such, that they could never be recovered by their masters, but that they become weary of their wandering way of life, and return home; or, as more frequently happens, seek an intercourse with the negroes on some distant plantation, by whom in the end they are apprehended and carried to the nearest workhouse. It is with such characters that the workhouses are filled, — criminal slaves, or such as have fled to escape the punishment of some crime they have committed, and are apprehended as run-aways where they are unknown; and the more numerous class of idle vagrants, who, with no disposition to work or to support themselves by their own labour, prey on the industry of others, like the vagrant paupers of England — with this difference, that the former support themselves wholly by plunder, while the

---

ing those accusations it is not my wish to say more or less. I am willing to believe they are calumnies till I see proof to the contrary; but granting they are, might not an enemy, who chose to use the weapons with which our author assails the colonists, thus express himself: 'Mr. Stephen's zeal for the system of slave-regis-'tration was, *I fear*, a mere cloak for selfish ends. He succeeded in getting his son 'into a lucrative situation; and that he has seduced him into official perfidy, in be-'traying the secrets of the colonial office, *there is abundant reason to believe.*'

latter, under a stricter police, and where provisions are not so easily got at, must generally be satisfied with what is given to them.

Now here is an evil, not of a temporary nature, but which will last, in a greater or less degree, until not only crimes, but all the minor vices of indolence, drunkenness, &c., shall cease among mankind. When that happy era shall arrive, then, indeed, Mr. Stephen's theory may be safely applied to practice; no workhouses will be required in Jamaica, nor houses of correction in England; and there will be no sales of workhouse-slaves. But what is to be done in the meantime? What other system of police for a society so constituted can he, or any of his friends, suggest, that will better preserve the peace of the country, better support the just rights of property, or more effectually promote the best interests of the community?

Suppose a slave of the above description deserts his master, and proceeds to a district a hundred or even fifty miles distant, where, assuming a new name, he pretends to be free, it is evident there is nothing but the laws in question to prevent him from carrying his point: if apprehended, the chances are, that neither the superintendent of the workhouse, nor any person in it, can detect the falsehood from a personal knowledge of him; nor is there any greater probability that the distant master can, from the false name given in the advertisement, discover his slave and claim him. Be it also remembered, that in this way not only fugitive slaves, or vagrants,

but criminals who had fled to escape the punishment of the worst crimes, would effect their freedom, while the faithful servant would remain in bondage. Whether this is Mr. Stephen's object, whether he wishes to give encouragement and protection to vice and crime, or if he errs through ignorance, it is the same thing to the colonists, to whom the result of his laws, however intended, would be destruction. It may, perhaps, be a question, whether slavery should be suffered to exist in the colonies, or put an end to at once by giving a fair compensation to the colonists; but surely no one will say that this is the way in which we ought to get quit of it. While the system exists, the law, if its object is to protect property, must surely be framed to keep as slaves those who are slaves, till legitimately freed. That it does more, is not proved, nor attempted to be proved. It is indeed alleged, that 'there is abundant reason to believe' it does more; but where this abundant reason to believe is to be found, we are not told; and if the evil did exist, it certainly is not a little extraordinary that it never should have been complained of by the free people of colour themselves.

In a society so constituted, it is manifest the law must necessarily take cognizance, not only of all known run-away slaves, or such vagrants as acknowledge themselves to be slaves, but also of all suspicious-looking unknown negroes who cannot give an account of themselves. And to say that such ought not to be sold, is, in other words, to say,

that a slave should only have to run away from his master, and be free; which, though some in England might think it highly proper (their own interest not being concerned,) cannot well be the law in Jamaica, or in any other country where slavery is established.

'A considerable number of the negroes advertised,' says Mr. S., 'will be found to have no known masters, and to allege that they are free persons; and yet the advertisements state that they are to be sold at an early period, unless claimed by an owner, or proved by sufficient evidence to be free.' p. 369.

To have no known master, and to be free, are pretences occasionally set up by the more artful; but any one who will take the trouble to look at the lists published, will see that but a very inconsiderable number of the negroes advertised ever pretend to be free. The 'early period' at which they may be sold is *four months* from the date of their committal.

Now as to the difficulty of producing evidence of freedom. In the first place, all manumission deeds are recorded, and the person manumitted has a certificate of it, or can procure one from the record at any time when wanted. Secondly, every one born free is baptized, and has his or her name recorded as a free person in the parochial registers; consequently, in either case, there can be no difficulty in procuring even 'documentary evidence' of freedom, if such were necessary, which in practice it is not; for to shew by reference to any respectable person that he

has been known as but *reputedly* free, is always sufficient to save a negro from being committed to a workhouse as a slave, or to liberate him from it if he has been committed. If, therefore, any free negro or mulatto, going to a part of the country where he is unknown, should, by any improper conduct, bring suspicion on himself, and be apprehended, and committed to a gaol or workhouse, and if he has no testimonial of his freedom to exhibit, can there be any difficulty in procuring, within four months, a certificate of his freedom from the Record Office or the parochial register, or the testimony or letter of some respectable person, stating that he has known him as reputedly free?

In these circumstances where is the danger, or indeed the possibility, of a free person being reduced to slavery? and let Mr. Stephen explain what benefit would result to the white people from it, as I cannot conceive any possible motive or inducement. The price received for workhouse-slaves goes to the public, not to any individual; moreover, they are such characters as no respectable planter will introduce among his people, and seldom sell for more than pays their fees.

As to free negroes coming from other states to settle in Jamaica, is it to be supposed that they will not, in removing from one island to another, use the very simple precaution of carrying with them documents which they know to be every where necessary in the colonies? And even if a free negro comes to Jamaica ignorant of this law, he learns it on his ar-

rival, and is under no necessity to remain; though the truth is, he would run no risk; as a decent person of any colour, earning his bread in an honest way, is no more molested in Jamaica than in England.

The question then comes to be, since such laws are necessary to protect property and keep as slaves those who are slaves till lawfully freed, whether these laws are so guarded that free persons are not endangered by them? For my own part, I think it is hardly possible to guard against this more anxiously than it is done in Jamaica. Not to mention the facility which free persons have in procuring evidence of their freedom, and that none ever are molested but such as there is reason to suspect are run-away slaves, it is expressly provided by the 70th and 71st sections of the slave law, that when any negro or other person, detained in any gaol or workhouse as a run-away slave, shall allege himself to be free, the custos, or senior justice of the precinct, shall immediately convene a special sessions, of not less than three justices of the peace, to investigate the truth of the allegation; and if it appear that such person so detained as a run-away slave is free, he shall be forthwith discharged; and no slave so detained, and making such allegation, shall be sold until such investigation has been made, otherwise the sale to be null and void.

Moreover, if the justices (easily satisfied as they always are where there is the least evidence to bear out the claim of freedom) should not decide that the person so detained is free, he has still another re-

source, and may serve an ejectment or writ of *Homine Replegiando* on the supervisor of the workhouse, who, by section 72d of the slave law, is required to give four weeks' previous notice thereof, with a description of the person; after which, if no owner comes forward to claim the person in question as his slave, he must be liberated; and if a claimant appears, he must prove a title before a court: the person detained as a slave is not, in this action, required to prove that he is free. In proof of this, I copy the following advertisement from the Royal Gazette, Jamaica, 5th June 1824: —

'*Kingston Workhouse, May 22d*, 1824.

'Whereas I have been this day served with an action of *Homine Replegiando* at the suit of a black woman, therein called Betsey alias Elizabeth Green, and stated to be free by Henry J. Ross, Esq., her attorney: Notice is therefore hereby given, that unless some person or persons shall, within the time limited by law, inform me of his, her, or their intention to take the defence of the said action, I shall release the said woman on her fees being paid. This woman was sent in under the name of Bessey Green, is a creole, five feet four inches high, marked $\frac{I}{D}$ on the left shoulder, and having stated herself to be free, was ordered, by L. M'Lean, Esq., sitting magistrate, on the 14th of October last, to be received into this workhouse, and detained until proceedings were instituted to prove the same.

HENRY BROUGHTON, Sup.'

This notice clearly shews the *onus probandi* in this action to be on the master claiming, and not on the slave. Whether E. Green be free or not, unless a person appears to claim her within four weeks after the date of the advertisement, she will be liberated; and if a claimant appears he must prove

his title; she is not required to prove that she is free.

It also deserves to be noticed, that the claimant must prove his right by *a written title, duly executed and recorded.* Mr. S. indeed, says, that 'the law 'allows the master to deduce his title by *parol evi-* 'dence, and demands no proof of the servile state, 'beyond the colour of the skin,' p. 390. But this is of a piece with his assertion, already noticed, when treating of the trial of slaves upon criminal accusations, that the proceedings against them in all cases, capital as well as others, are '*wholly by parol.*' There is just as much truth in the one proposition as in the other. A man can no more lay claim to a negro in Jamaica, than to an estate in England, without shewing a legal title. Hence, in purchasing slaves, the first object always is, to ascertain from the public records that the person offering them for sale holds a valid title, and has a right to dispose of them.

No evidence has been, nor, I believe, can be, adduced to shew that free persons have ever suffered wrong by the police laws under consideration; while, on the other hand, it is notorious that slaves in Jamaica, by deserting and removing to a distant part of the island, frequently manage to pass themselves as free, till by being reputed as such, they obtain a sort of prescriptive right to freedom; which, though it may not entitle them to all the privileges of free people, such as giving evidence, &c., will save them from being committed to a workhouse.

Many negroes I have myself employed on board of coasting vessels as free persons, who had no document of freedom to shew, and who, I had no doubt, were run-away slaves; but that was no business of mine; I paid them their wages as others did, and made no inquiries.

Let the reader now turn to Mr. S., bearing in mind the provisions of the law to protect free persons, with the fact, that while no cases of such persons having been reduced to slavery in the colonies are even attempted to be proved, instances of slaves effecting their freedom, by deserting and passing themselves as free, are frequent and notorious.

'I have said that the Assemblies, while leaving the sources of the condition undefined, have, by the presumption against freedom, and by the police acts together, virtually sanctioned every source of slavery to which private fraud or violence may resort. But this is an inadequate view of the case. They have invented a cause of slavery, additional to all those which lawgivers, civil or barbarous, have elsewhere recognised, or rapacious avarice explored; namely, the having a black skin without a deed of manumission. They have thus contrived to effect what human despotism never attempted or imagined before. When they made a black or tawny skin a presumption of bondage, they threw a convenient veil over the enormities of the slave trade, and indulged their proud contempt of the African race, without danger to any one whose censure they feared, or whose rights they deemed worth protecting. Free negroes and mulattoes might probably suffer from it; but these have no share in the work of legislation, or in electing the assemblies; and from an *odious* middle class, which it has been the uniform though preposterous policy of the British colonies to discourage and reduce.' pp. 371—2.

This is the language of the man, who says his object 'is not to inflame popular indignation;' this

is the book which the London emancipation society solicited the publication of, in the cause of Christian benevolence!

We have already asked Mr. Stephen to produce, in proof of this cruel and unmerited charge, *a single instance* of a free person having been reduced to slavery in the colonies. We call upon him also to reconcile the fact he himself admits, that people of colour are 'rapidly increasing,' with his charge, that a 'black or a tawny skin, without a deed of manu-'mission, dooms those persons to indiscriminate sla-'very.' We call upon him farther to bring forward the evidence of the free coloured people themselves, whom we are accused of so cruelly injuring; they have repeatedly, both the blacks and the browns, applied to the legislature for extension of their political rights, which sometimes has been granted and sometimes refused; they have repeatedly complained of *grievances;* but when did they complain that any of their numbers were reduced by violence and injustice to a state of slavery? and what other grievance could equal this?

Alleged antipathy of the white to the black and brown people.

In every page of his laboured work, Mr. Stephen speaks of the hatred and contempt which the white people in the colonies have of the black and brown. This, above all things, he 'hammers on the public 'ear.' But the idea is too preposterous to be entertained by any reasonable person; causes are obvious for a master's attachment to his labourers, who are at the same time his property and humble

dependants; but we can imagine no causes for hatred and contempt of them. Nor can we imagine any cause for that animosity which has been said to exist between the whites and the free people of colour, linked together as they are by consanguinity and a community of interests. If the latter are rising into importance as a class, — if some individuals among them own considerable property and have been liberally educated, can a single case of the kind be adduced where they have not been indebted for these blessings to their white relatives and friends? True, they have not yet an equality of political privileges with the white people; but as a body are they yet fit to be put upon an equality? and if not, how is the line of distinction to be drawn between the few who are, and the many who are not? Persons of property and respectability among them are fully sensible of this difficulty, and are far from desiring that public tranquillity should be hazarded by premature measures. Individuals of an opposite description will be found in every country; but, (though there may be some prejudices to overcome, and some partial distinctions which might as well be removed,) I have never, in my own experience, seen any appearance of animosity between the two classes of white and brown people on this ground; nor do I think there is any danger of a misunderstanding, unless the torch of discord is carried among them by the party in this country who are disposed to imbitter every thing, and embroil the different classes, in the colonies. These, like Tom

Paine, find no difficulty in settling the rights of man; governments have not found it quite so easy.

Superiority of the white people, how viewed by the Negroes.

That African negroes are looked upon as a class inferior to enlightened Britons is true; they are themselves perfectly sensible of their inferiority, however much at a loss to account for it. Building ships, for instance, particularly men of war, and sailors '*finding pass*' (finding their way) in the ocean from Guinea to Buckra Country, as they call Jamaica, I have often heard them speak of with astonishment; and I was much struck with their admiration of the first 'steam-engine,' or '*smoke-mill,*' as they call it, that was set to work in the neighbourhood where I resided, and which they came from all quarters to see. The common explanation was, 'Massa-nigger! wharra dem Buckra no savi? Wharra dem no can do?' (Fellow-servant! what is it the white people do not know? What is it they cannot do?) *

Emancipation.

'Sect. VI. Of Enfranchisement.' p. 374.

This subject is introduced by a beautiful and affecting figure, in which our author fancies himself to be Baron Trenck, immured in a gloomy and soli-

* Some years ago, the boiler-men negroes on Duckenfield estate were overheard by the book-keeper discoursing on this subject, (the superiority of the whites,) and various opinions were given, till the question was thus set to rest by an old African: 'When God Almighty made de world, him make two man, a nigger and a buckra; 'and him give dem two box, and him tell dem for make dem choice. Nigger (nig-'ger greedy from time!) when him find one box heavy, him take it, and buckra take 't'other; when dem open de box, buckra see pen, ink, and paper; nigger box full 'up with hoe and bill, and hoe and bill for nigger till this day.'

tary dungeon, labouring, body and soul, to work his way out: —

'Impatience and dejection,' says he, 'would indeed often return; but after paroxysms of these, hope would again come to soothe me and animate my efforts. My tyrant would lose much of his purpose, for he would not break my heart, unless by finding out my secret labours, and preventing their resumption, he should shut out the ray of hope which had cheered me, and plunge me in the darkness of despair. Such is the value of possible, but far more that of potential liberty, to the slave.' p. 375.

A very beautiful and very affecting description certainly, if Mr. Stephen were really Baron Trenck, deprived of 'possible or potential liberty,' or if the slaves, whom he personates, were really in such a situation as is implied by the comparison. Fortunately, it is quite inapplicable to them. The negro labourers in the West Indies feel it no more a degradation or a hardship, that having their wants and comforts supplied by their masters, they must work for them to the end of their days, than the free labourers in Britain do, that to procure daily bread, they are doomed to a life of toil that can end only with their existence, while they see the master whom they serve, wallowing in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of life, and spending more in one day than the pittance that repays the toil and supplies hundreds of his poor dependents with the bare means of existence.

Emancipation, how understood by the Slaves.

People are apt to err by applying their own feelings to the case of others; and by whom was this

error ever more likely to be fallen into than by enlightened free-born Englishmen, applying the standard of their own minds to the case of the African slave, who in some things has not an idea in common with them? Freedom, to an Englishman, appears an object of such paramount importance, that every earthly blessing sinks into insignificance in comparison; while to the negro, who has been born and bred up in slavery, who considers labour the only evil, and idleness the only bliss, freedom, as British labourers understand and enjoy it, is a thing as yet unknown and undesired. I have lived twenty-one years among negroes, and never heard one of them express a sentiment with regard to freedom, such as Englishmen entertain. They speak of it as desireable, viewing it as the enjoyment of wealth with an exemption from labour; but freedom, joined with poverty and labour, is a thing they even ridicule; and I have more than once witnessed how much an independent wealthy slave can look down on a poor freeman of his own colour. On Golden Grove estate, the property of Mr. Arcedeckne, on which I many years resided, a little colony of free blacks have established themselves on the sea-side, and are by sufferance allowed to remain. They pay no rent; and yet such is their indolence and improvidence, that they are, to my certain knowledge, supported in no small degree by the bounty of the slaves on the neighbouring plantations. I have often myself assisted them with medicine, food, &c.,

and have known medical gentlemen, on several occasions, attend them in sickness without, of course, looking for a fee.

That freedom should be a blessing when 'joined, 'as it often is, with much abject toil and great mi-'sery,' is as incomprehensible to the negroes, as that the element of water should become solid by cold. To exemplify their understanding of freedom, I may mention that I have heard my own servants, when I happened to be longer in bed than usual, say to one another, 'Massa think he a free man this morning;' meaning that I thought I had nothing to do, and was indulging in idleness instead of attending to business. Such generally, if not universally, is the meaning which they attach to being free; they have no more conception of the labour performed by the free people of England, (so much greater than they themselves perform), than these have of the greater comforts enjoyed by the slaves. And the eloquence of a CANNING would fail to convince a negro slave that he would be benefited by being freed, if he had to lose his present home, provide himself with another, and work as hard as before to support himself and his children, hitherto provided for by his master. Nor, indeed, is emancipation much better understood in its various bearings and probable results, by the supporters of it in this country, than by the slaves in the colonies. Here it is one thing; there it is another: here, it is to make the negroes an industrious and enterprising free peasantry; there, it is to be a liberation from the master's au-

thority, an exemption from labour, in short the free and full enjoyment of enviable idleness, in the houses and land belonging to their masters, which they now occupy.

Danger from discussions on emancipation.

Nor can they in reason be blamed; for as this is the only change they can comprehend that would benefit them, what more natural than to conclude it to be that which is intended? And if this is, indeed, what the mother country in its wisdom and benevolence intends, all is well; if not, it cannot too soon put an end to discussions which may induce them to take by violence, what they are led to think unjustly withheld by their masters. Let it not be supposed that, far as they are distant, they are not informed of what is going on. The parliamentary proceedings on the subject of the colonies, find their way to every plantation in Jamaica as fast as the winds can waft them, and are the subject of conversation in the presence of negro servants, who speedily carry them from the tables of the white people to those of the slaves. Nor is this the only channel of communication they have: for, not to speak of the black and coloured servants constantly returning from England to the colonies, and carrying with them a confused notion of intended emancipation, there is another even more dangerous channel: many of the free coloured people are educated, and not only get the newspapers, but through incendiaries the twopenny pamphlets published in England, which almost openly advocate insurrection; through

the coloured people the contents of these villanous productions reach the ears of the slaves; and kindly treated and happy as they in general are, it is too much to expect that the labourers in any country can long withstand an almost direct instigation to rebellion. Even in this country, where the arm of government is so much stronger than in the colonies, could such inflammatory language be addressed to the labouring classes without danger of the most fatal consequences? Only suppose that societies and institutions were formed for the avowed purpose of bettering the condition of the operatives; that meetings were held, speeches made, and reports published, giving the most touching (no matter however false) description of the hardships they endure; that the capitalists and great landowners were held up in the most odious light, as men wallowing in wealth 'wrung from the sinews' of their fellow-creatures,* as 'eating the bread of the fatherless, and grinding the faces of the poor,' as with 'hating and despising the working classes;'

* At the late anti-slavery meeting in Norfolk, Mr. Buxton is reported to have spoken of the colonists as '*fattening on the labours of the slaves*,'—an expression of peculiar felicity in the mouth of a man who himself enjoys such wealth, 'derived '(as the Rev. Thomas Cooper hath it) from the sinews of the negroes!' But Mr. Stephen's eloquence beats every thing in this way, and may be taken as a perfect pattern by those who would stir up the populace of any country against their rulers or the men of property. Thus we have on the one side, 'savage tyrants, in-'human oppressors, ferocious masters, cruel and unfeeling masters, cruel brutalizers 'of their people, brutal oppressors, white monarchs, white oligarchists, white mobi-'lity, white majesties, &c. &c.' And, on the other side, 'African victims, abject 'despised negro, oppression of the helpless, extreme and cruel oppression, sad des-'tiny, unoffending Africans, extreme and helpless slavery, sad state of man, poor 'slaves, poor beings, poor drudges, &c. &c.'

in short, just such tyrants and oppressors as the colonists have been most falsely represented; and say, if combination, riot, rebellion, and revolution, are not the consequences that might be anticipated? True, the proceedings of the anti-colonists are not in Jamaica; but are they not known there? Is it not notorious that some of the most inflammatory pamphlets published in England have been sent out for the express purpose of being disseminated among the slaves and people of colour? Not only pamphlets are sent out, but crockery ware and handkerchiefs with inscriptions and devices representing them as oppressed, and calling on them to rise and take vengeance on their oppressors.

If these facts are not known, they ought to be known; it may soon be too late: and they will have much to answer for who have lent their aid to carry bloodshed and misery into the abodes of peace. In the public prints it is frequently asked, if the negroes in the colonies are so comfortable and so perfectly contented, how comes there to be so much danger of insurrection? This question is partly answered by what has just been stated; to which it may be added, that among them, as among every other people, there are some designing, restless, and ambitious individuals, who would be glad to foment mischief in the hope of acquiring an ascendency; the same principle that has in some degree influenced the revolutionists in all countries, and is here particularly dangerous from the ignorance of so great a part of the population. But was there ever

an insurrection of negroes known, the object of which was freedom, as freedom is enjoyed by the labourers in this country, and as the advocates of emancipation perhaps intend it for the negroes,—a release from the master's authority, with the loss of his protection and support, for permission to labour where they will, and for whom they will, as the labourers in England do? Never. Nor am I aware that excessive labour, or ill treatment of any kind, has ever been assigned by the negroes in our colonies as the cause of insurrection. The insurrection of the Koromantyn slaves in Jamaica, in 1760, was the act of savage Africans, newly imported and impatient of restraint; the more recent disturbances in that island proceeded from an idea entertained by the negroes, that liberty had been granted them by the King, and was unjustly withheld by their masters. On this subject, I quote the Report of a Committee of the House of Assembly, Session 1824:

'Your Committee has sedulously endeavoured to trace the origin of the various disturbances which have so recently agitated the island, and in no one instance have they been attributed to any complaints preferred by the slaves, of cruel treatment experienced from their masters or overseers, or the privation of any rights with which usage o. law had invested them. On the contrary thereof, the very negroes who have atoned by the forfeiture of their lives for the violation of the laws of their country, declared, both before their conviction and at the place of execution, that they were contented and happy till they imbibed notions that the King and Wilberforce had made them free.

'This idea is not confined to any one particular parish, but appears to have pervaded the whole island, and has taken such full possession of the negro mind, that it forms the constant theme of his conversa-

tion; and its effects are too lamentably shewn by the altered demeanour, and the reluctance exhibited in discharging his ordinary duties. All notions of dependence and subjection to the authority of his master are now excluded, and so far from regarding the latter with his wonted feelings of respect and affection, he looks upon him as his bitterest enemy, in withholding from him the enjoyment of those privileges which the mother country is supposed to have conceded. The natural result of this has been, a restless expectation of benefits of which they have no definite idea: some looking forward to emancipation, while others, more moderate, confine their views to the enjoyment of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, as set apart exclusively for the negro. The discussions which from time to time are renewed in the British Parliament, and with which the negroes become acquainted, tend to keep alive these feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction, and will, if persisted in, eventually place a barrier of insurmountable hostility between the master and his slave, and inevitably defeat the object which even the advocates of emancipation themselves entertain: for instead of diffusing a pure and salutary light, which might gradually prepare the negro mind for that improvement in its condition which may be alone contemplated, they infuse notions inimical to their own happiness and to the welfare of the colony; the effect of which, your committee dread, will be to kindle a flame which, if ever extinguished, will only be quenched in blood. The wishes and good intentions of the master have been paralyzed by the fear that scenes of revolt may be of too frequent occurrence to afford any rational prospect, that the fatal delusion which now overshadows the mind of the negro may be eventually removed; and however anxious he may be to adopt measures, which prudence and humanity may suggest as tending to ameliorate the condition of his slaves, he dares not, lest they should be considered acts of compulsion, and thereby excite feelings of triumph in the negro bosom, which no subsequent events could possibly allay.'

To the same effect, his Grace the Duke of Manchester, in a despatch to Earl Bathurst, of date 1st July 1824, says:—

'I cannot conceal from your Lordship, that the delusion which

the negroes throughout the island have generally participated in,—that they are entitled to their freedom, has not been removed by the publication of his Majesty's Proclamation. They have been heard to declare, in various parts of the island, that the Proclamation is a forgery, and has been fabricated in this country by their owners. Whether the impression will ever be removed it is difficult to say, but I am extremely apprehensive that some time will elapse before the island is again restored to a perfect state of tranquillity.'

Sir B. d'Urban, Governor of Demarara, in a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, of date the 5th of May 1824, in allusion to the late revolt in that colony, writes thus:—

'Respecting the actual state of feeling and disposition of the slaves, the result of all the information I have collected, compared, and combined, is not very satisfactory; for it compels me to be convinced that the spirit of discontent is any thing but extinct; it is alive, as it were, under its ashes; and the negro mind, although giving forth no marked indications of mischief to those not accustomed to observe it, is still agitated, jealous, and suspicious.

'Many of the slaves in this colony, and especially those on the east coast, (which was the theatre of the revolt,) are described to me as remarkably well informed upon all that passes in England and in the colonies interesting to their views and condition; many of them read; most of them well understand what is read or repeated to them; they are all naturally enough inquisitive to learn whatever relates to them; and, unquestionably, they continue to procure very early information of all discussions in Parliament, in the newspapers, and in the public prints.'

To remove the delusion among the slaves 'that 'orders had been sent out for their emancipation,' a Proclamation by the King was published, after the recent revolt, by the late Governor Major-General Murray. His successor in the government, Sir B.

d'Urban, found it necessary to issue another: 'And,' continues his Excellency, in the despatch above quoted, 'in order to insure the due circulation of 'this Proclamation, the faith of the negroes in its authenticity, and its consequent influence upon 'them, I am proceeding through the districts of the 'east coast, and have appointed that two chosen 'slaves from each estate shall meet me at the resi- 'dence of their respective burgher captains, where 'I shall in person read the Proclamation to them, 'explain to them myself what I wish explained, 'and send them back to their comrades. I look 'forward to good effects from this measure, &c.'

These documents shew what the extent of the delusion has been among the negroes, the melancholy effects it produced, and the difficulty of removing it. Yet, in the face of such unquestionable evidence, there are not wanting individuals who deny that the discussions in this country, either in Parliament or out of it, can at all endanger the peace of the colonies; nay, the danger and alarm of an insurrection are no sooner over, than it is denied that there was an insurrection,—that there was even a serious offence committed by the negroes; and, of course, the blood of the deluded victims is laid at the door of the colonists. Thus, speaking of the late insurrection in Demarara, 'there was nothing like a grave 'offence committed by the slaves,' says the Edinburgh Review; 'the negroes *struck work;* the blun- 'dering indecision of their rulers, and the seditious 'squabbles of the constituted authorities, occasion-

'ed a belief that they were freed. To ascertain 'this, they took steps which, in England, would 'have been punished with a month's imprisonment, 'and straightway the land streamed with blood.'

Struck work! — was the expression ever before applied to a body of slaves, amounting to some hundreds, assembled in arms against their masters? But however this party may palliate insurrection among the negroes, by saying they had only *struck work*; or however it may cast the blame of the negroes being misled into the belief that their freedom had been sent out, on the indecision of their rulers and the squabbles of the constituted authorities: while the white people exist in the colonies, they *must* maintain order and subordination: in the midst of a population so constituted, and where there may soon be such fearful odds against them, they will think of self-preservation, — they will not wait till the insurrection makes head, — till they are overpowered with numbers, and, as the Review expresses it, 'the knife is at their throats.'

According to Mr. Stephen, it is intolerable oppression that goads the negroes into resistance; but if we believe the accounts given us in history, it has at least sometimes happened, that slaves have been found the foremost and most active in rebellion where the reins of authority had been most slackened, and the greatest indulgences had been granted to them. Order and subordination must be maintained in the West Indies as elsewhere, and it is well known that on plantations where, either through pusillanimity,

indolence, or ill-timed lenity, order and subordination are not maintained, *there* will ever be found the greatest discontent among the slaves, the greatest trouble to the manager, and the least prosperity to both masters and slaves. Negroes are but children in intellect, and, like children, easily spoiled; both may be treated with kindness, and yet a proper authority kept up; but by both it is not unusual to see kindness very ill requited, where discipline is neglected.

Fatal consequences to the Slaves of premature emancipation.

Even setting aside the consideration due to vested rights of property, which ought never to be violated, it is my most sincere opinion, that if the demon of mischief himself were to have power granted him to dictate the measure best calculated to accomplish the destruction of all classes in the British colonies, slaves as well as others, it would be immediate or premature emancipation; and unquestionably, the consequences of thus casting the slaves loose from authority in their present state, would be such as could afford gratification only to such a spirit, — strife, carnage, and desolation.

Gratifying as it would be to every benevolent mind to see ignorance, vice, and misery, extirpated from the earth, and the whole race of mankind, from the rising to the setting sun, enjoying the blessings of freedom, religion, and science, let us not be misled by Utopian dreams to attempt what is so far beyond mortal power, as to change an ignorant and comparatively savage people, and at once raise them to an

equality with the most enlightened; nor let us forget that what are good laws for the one, may be very unfit for the other. The minds of the negroes must be more enlightened; they must acquire a taste for something more than satisfying the mere animal wants of the body, a taste for the higher, though perhaps artificial, pleasures and acquirements, which stimulate the industry of civilized life; in short, emancipation must be allowed time to effect itself among them, as it has done in other countries. It never can be given to a whole class of people at once, without the most evident danger; and every attempt to press it beyond the progress of education and knowledge and a proper estimate of freedom, will be found in the end to retard instead of promoting civilization.

Emancipation of Slaves in America.

Among instances which have been brought forward to establish the practicability of an immediate or general emancipation, we have seen reference made to some of the states of North America, *Pensylvania*, *New York*, and *New Jersey*, where laws were passed by their own respective legislatures, declaring that slavery should cease after a certain subsequent date. But, in the first place, between these states and our colonies there exists no parallel, because the number of slaves in the former was altogether insignificant compared with the white population, for whose labour the climate is better adapted than for the labour of negroes. Nor is this all: there is another circumstance in the case, which those who bring it forward as a pattern to us, are

either ignorant of or take care never to mention; in point of fact, though there was an abolition of slavery in those states, *there was no emancipation*, as the slaves were only removed to the more southern states before the date when slavery was to cease. I witnessed myself a cargo of those unfortunate beings shipping off from New Jersey for Louisiana, and the impression on my mind was, that, however good a thing it might be for New Jersey, the law which put an end to slavery in it, had done any thing but benefited the slaves, who were thus torn from their homes, to be employed in what Mr. Stephen calls 'the lethiferous process of opening new lands,' in the distant swamps of Louisiana.

Suppose a law were passed, by which slavery was to cease in the Bahamas in 1830, and that the whole of the slaves there, were, before that period, removed to Demarara, it would be exactly such a case of emancipation as has been quoted from America.

Emancipation—Right of Redemption.

The dissolution of slavery is distinguished by Mr. Stephen into three modes; 1, Redemption; 2, Manumission; 3, Enfranchisement by public authority.

'I mean by redemption, the dissolution of slavery by force of a condition previously annexed to it for the benefit of the slave, the performance of which, on his part or behalf, entitles him to his freedom by law, independently of his master's will. Slavery has not every where been redeemable. It is almost needless therefore to say, that there is no such mitigation of the state in the British colonies.' p. 378.

This leads into a comparison of the slave laws of other states with those in our colonies, which termi-

nates, as usual, in proving ours to be the worst that ever existed in any age or country.

Speaking of the law of the Spanish colonies, Mr. S. says:

'The enslaved negro may not only compel the master to accept of his value, when tendered, as the price of his freedom, which value, when contested, the civil magistrate is empowered to adjust; but may even redeem himself progressively, by paying a portion of that price, for an equal proportion of the time during which he is bound to labour for the master. When rich enough, for instance, to pay a sixth-part of his appreciation, he may redeem, for his own use, one day in the week; by employing which industriously he will of course be much sooner enabled to buy out a second day, than he could have been through any other application of the money first acquired; and by pursuing the same laudable course, the remainder of his time may obviously be redeemed with a continually accelerated progress, till he becomes entitled to an entire and final manumission.' p. 383.

Such may be the written law of Spain, but is it acted upon? Mr. S. does not, and, I fear, cannot say so. A person unacquainted with the colonies, who took his opinions from the work before us, would perhaps suppose that it is only necessary for parliament 'to cease impotently, and mischievously, 'to *recommend*, and begin at length to ORDAIN,' in other words, perhaps, to make a similar redemption law for our colonies, and all would be well. But if parliament should begin to ordain, as Mr. S. recommends, and should pass such a law, the result might be, if the feelings of the colonists did not go along with it, not to benefit but seriously to injure the slaves. Who does not know that their means of acquiring wealth depend in no small degree on the

master's indulgence? That they keep horses, cattle, asses, pigs, and poultry, which are fed on his grass, corn, and canes? That they not only have his land to cultivate to any extent they please, but often the use of his cattle and waggons to take their provisions to market? Supposing, therefore, that by such a law it became the master's interest to keep his slaves poor, that they might not possess the means of purchasing their freedom, and to limit those indulgences to what his own interest in their welfare required, is it not sufficiently clear that its effects might be to injure instead of benefiting the slaves? Such a feeling, I am confident, will never find a place in the breasts of English colonists; and I make the observation only to shew how utterly unavailing, if not absolutely injurious, any attempt must prove to legislate in London on matters so little understood there as the internal affairs of the colonies. 'The parliament,' says Franklin, 'cannot well and wisely make laws suited to the colonies without being properly and truly informed of their circumstances, abilities, temper, &c. This it cannot be without representatives from thence, and yet it is fond of this power, and averse to the only means of acquiring the necessary knowledge for exercising it, which is desiring to be omnipotent without being omniscient.'

But would a right of redemption, even if granted by the colonial legislatures, be, after all, so great a boon to the slaves as is supposed? I am not an advocate against the measure, but I think not; because without it, I believe, the cases are very rare where

manumission would now be refused to a slave who desired it, and had the means of giving a fair equivalent to his master. Many, no doubt, will suppose that every slave who had the means would be desirous to redeem himself—that it would be the first object of his heart to obtain that which, in their minds, alone

'Gives the flower
'Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume.'

But a better knowledge of what the negroes are, and of the circumstances in which they are placed, will lead to a different conclusion, or at least will shew, that it may be a question with a slave whether freedom would better his condition. It is, generally speaking, only the industrious and wealthy slaves who could avail themselves of the right of redemption, if granted; and as these are the most comfortable in their present condition, they are of course the least anxious to change it. Besides, the mere cost of freedom, though considerable, is by no means the only difficulty; there is the further and greater sacrifice of relinquishing their homes on the master's land, with all the advantages and comforts these afford, and of separating themselves from their friends and kindred. As his slaves, the master was bound to support them; when freed, they have no longer any claim on him, or right to any part of his estate. Some, perhaps, will say—might they not be permitted to remain on the estate and occupy their houses and provision grounds, on condition of working for their masters as free labourers? Perhaps few

proprietors would object to this; but a plantation negro would consider it a perfect absurdity to be free and to continue to work on the estate; at least, I have never known or heard of one of them when freed continuing to do agricultural labour. And were a freed negro allowed to keep possession of his house and ground only on condition that he should still work, in order to pay a rent for the house and land he occupied, and to supply himself with the articles formerly furnished by his master, he would be apt to regard his situation as not much improved—certainly not so much so as to induce him to pay a large sum of money for his manumission.

The liberal practice of allowing freed negroes, as a matter of grace, to remain on the plantation and occupy the houses and land which they possessed as slaves, although not certainly to be expected from Mr. Stephen's account of the feelings of the colonists towards the negroes, that 'hated and despised race,' has not been uncommon. I wish I could say that the good conduct of these afforded a practical illustration of the blessings of freedom to the negroes—that, released from the master's authority, they were industrious for themselves—that they acquired better moral habits, or enjoyed greater comforts; but unfortunately, in all these important particulars, the reverse is well known to be the case. Abandoning themselves to listless indolence, or doing only what little is necessary for existence, they not only are a bad example to the other people, but, having more opportunities, often aid

them in stealing and marketing the produce of the estate.*

From the considerations which have been stated, it does not appear to me that the granting a right of redemption could, on the one hand, be attended with so much danger to the land-owners, or, on the other, with so much benefit to the slaves, as many suppose. Its effects, at best, could be but limited in changing the condition of the slave population. Not only are many of the slaves unable to redeem themselves, but, if it were otherwise, the sacrifice is too great to be submitted to, circumstanced as they are, and as yet so incapable of estimating the blessings of freedom.

Emancipation, how to be accomplished.

How then, it may be asked, is this object, so desirable to humanity, to be accomplished? Is there to be no end to negro slavery? To this I answer, that, like many other evils, time will be necessary for its cure or removal. Individual manumissions may do something, may be a necessary means, but it is to the improvement of the people, to the gradual melioration of their condition, to 'the emancipation, not of slaves, but of slavery,' as Mr. Barham has well expressed it, that we must look for the final extinction of this degrading state. In proportion to the progress of the negroes in moral improvement, in knowledge, religion, and habits of industry growing

* I once saw a free negro detected at Plaintain Garden River Wharf with no less than 1680lbs. of sugar, which he was putting on board a drogger for Kingston, in covered baskets as edoes. On inquiry, it was found that he had procured it through the slaves on the estate where he resided. The manager threatened to have him tried and hanged; but an opportunity was given him to escape.

with a taste for the comforts and enjoyments of civilized life, the arbitrary power of the master will become unnecessary, and will be abridged or relinquished; the power of punishment will pass more and more into the hands of the civil magistrate, and slavery will gradually assimilate to the servitude of Europe. Thus only can general emancipation be accomplished with advantage to the negroes. An act of parliament, or rather the power of the mother country, might emancipate the negroes from their present masters — the Governor of Jamaica might be instructed to issue a proclamation in the King's name, declaring the slaves in that island to be free, (*and let the reader pause to imagine the probable consequences!*) but an act of parliament, or a proclamation by the Governor, can no more convert them into a free, industrious, and happy peasantry, than it can change the colour of their skins.

Too many in this country are apt to charge the ignorance, and rude state of the negroes in our colonies, wholly on their being slaves, forgetting that they were carried thither from the most barbarous parts of the earth, (many of them not twenty years ago,) and have not yet had time, under any system, to make *great* progress towards refinement. But, though not yet civilized and refined, (as the Edinburgh Review assures us the negroes in St. Domingo are!) they are making progress; and in Jamaica it is by no means inconsiderable; they have become more intelligent and industrious; from the cultivation of the land allotted to them they are acquiring

wealth, and learning habits of voluntary labour; and, most important of all, religion is now spreading its benign light among them, and dispelling the gloomy horrors of African superstition

Good effects of giving land to the Slaves to cultivate for their support.

The system adopted in Jamaica of assigning land to newly-imported Africans, and requiring them to cultivate it for their own subsistence, was not perhaps the best calculated for their preservation in the first instance. Many of them (notwithstanding every care and attention on the part of their owner or manager) made a very ill use of the time given them for the cultivation of their grounds. But, on the other hand, when they had learned or become accustomed to do this, and as people born in the island grew up, the system possessed many advantages over that (adopted in some of the other colonies) of providing food for them. Negroes, working exclusively for the master, and supported from hand to mouth, as it is termed, have no opportunity or incitement to *voluntary* labour, and therefore can scarcely ever acquire habits of industry, so essential to raise them in the scale of civilization. Where land is allotted to them the case is different; three or four hundred people require a large part of a sugar estate for their provision grounds, and each considers the portion of land he occupies just as much his property, while a slave on the domain, as the cane-field is the property of his master. Thus set down with his family on his little farm, a negro has a powerful incentive to industry; he finds his

labour repaid by the enjoyment of comforts far beyond the mere means of subsistence; he cultivates such articles of food as he likes best for his own use; he carries his surplus productions to market, and with the means thus procured furnishes his house and dresses his family in a superior manner; in short, as in other communities, he finds his share of the good things of life, and the consideration paid him by his compeers, proportioned to his enterprise and successful industry. A common opinion entertained in this country regarding the slaves is, that the circumstances of the whole are exactly the same, — a herd of wretches toiling and fed like cattle. Nothing can be more erroneous; the circumstances of the negro labourers in a plantation village are just as various as those of the working classes in an English village: some are indolent, some industrious — some improvident and poor, some saving and rich — some have poor accommodation, some well furnished and comfortable houses. It is almost unnecessary to remark (as another advantage of the system) that, with the increasing wealth of the negroes, the security of the island is increasing at the same time. A man who has a good house and garden, a stock of pigs and poultry, and a piece of land in good cultivation, — who goes home at night when the work of the day is over, to find himself comfortable with his wife and family, will be much less likely to embark in any desperate undertaking than an individual who may gain something by revolution, and has nothing to lose.

It is well observed by Mr. Stephen (though of course he does not allow that the observation applies in the British colonies) that, 'if it has been 'the common lot of agricultural slaves to endure 'more labour than other bondmen, it has, on the 'other hand, been their advantage, not only to be 'less exposed than domestics to the caprice and ill 'temper of a master, but to have a far greater sta- 'bility of situation, and a surer possession of their 'families, and of the property they have been per- 'mitted to acquire. Self-interest and convenience 'have also everywhere suggested to the land-holder 'to allot to them portions of his soil, by the tillage 'of which they might provide for the subsistence of 'their families; and to limit his demands to that 'disposable surplus of labour which they might be 'able to bestow on his domain. Hence, by a na- 'tural gradation, have arisen, first, an inseparable 'connexion with, and afterwards a qualified pro- 'perty in, the lands by which they were sustained. 'Personal freedom has been only the last link in a 'chain of natural consequences, by which the en- 'slaved husbandman has been elevated from the 'hapless state into which the barbarous warfare of 'an iron age had plunged his progenitors.' p. 63.

Such evidently is the course the plantation negroes in our colonies will run, or on which I should rather say they have already entered; Mr. Stephen denies that this can be the case, or that any such happy change can be their lot, 'because they are '*liable* to be sold separate from the land.' But to

borrow his own words, when speaking of the same thing in the villeinage of England, this is a grievance 'rather in theory than in practice.' The great majority of the slaves in Jamaica are settled on the plantations, and must remain on them as long as the sugar-cane or the coffee-plant is cultivated in the island. They may be sold along with the estates, but scarcely can be sold separate, as the estates would be of little value without them. To borrow Mr. Stephen's words again, 'where there is 'no regular and certain man-market, in which a 'new stock of peasants can be bought, an estate 'will hardly be purchased without the slaves which 'have been usually employed in its culture, though 'the connexion between them should be dissoluble 'in point of law.' p. 67.

Attaching the slaves to the soil.

Much has been said about attaching the slaves to the soil, and every friend to humanity must wish that it may be soon accomplished, as the sale of them, particularly under process of distress, constitutes by far the worst feature in colonial slavery. But how personal slaves, mechanics, or jobbers, can be attached to the soil, I have never seen explained, and cannot imagine. Of the 320,000 slaves in Jamaica, I think we may venture to say, not less than from 250,000 to 270,000 are settled on the larger estates, whence there never can be any inducement to remove them. These there could be no difficulty that I can see in attaching by law to the soil; in effect, they are attached to it already. The other

50,000 to 70,000 are the property of small settlers, jobbers, mechanics, and persons in towns. In attaching these, or any of them, to the soil under present circumstances, great, and I fear, insurmountable, difficulties present themselves. Many of them live on land held only in lease by their masters; not a few have no connexion whatever with the soil; the jobbing gangs, in general, are settled on land little more than sufficient to grow food for them, and are hired out by the day, or at piece-work, on such sugar estates in the neighbourhood as are short of hands. To attach these to their provision grounds would be injurious to their master, as depriving him in a great measure of the power to dispose of them; and no less so to the slaves, in dooming them and their offspring to continue as jobbers, instead of being purchased and removed to a more comfortable settlement on some of the sugar estates, as they most likely would be on the death or return to England of their present masters. How these difficulties, and those which would arise from the securities held by creditors on many such slaves, could be got over, I confess myself unable to discover; but, in the mean time, it is gratifying to see a change in progress which is gradually narrowing, and will, at no distant period, remove the greater part of those difficulties, and, perhaps without the aid of legislative enactment, attach the negroes with few exceptions to the soil. I had formerly occasion to mention, that among the changes which, since the abolition, time has been effecting in the colonies, not the least im-

portant is, that the slaves have been gradually getting into fewer hands. While the African trade was carried on, there was scarcely an overseer that was not an owner of slaves—scarcely a person, black or brown, who could afford it, but had purchased one or more from the Guinea ships. The case is now very different; there is not an overseer in ten who owns a slave. Many of the jobbing gangs, which belonged to them at the time of the abolition, have since been bought up by the plantations; and although the present gangs may be increased by occasional purchases from petty owners, no one now attempts to form a new jobbing gang. Individual slaves can no longer be purchased, as they were from the ships; and many who might wish to purchase one, are unable to buy a whole family; the consequence is, that slaves are going out of the hands of the lower classes into those of the more wealthy, and concentrating on the plantations. Already there is no small difficulty in Jamaica in procuring a slave as a personal servant, at least it is rare that he can be purchased; and there is only the choice of hiring another man's slave, or hiring a free person, which is now becoming the more common practice. Formerly the mechanics about towns were nearly all slaves; now we have, for the most part, free people of colour as masons, carpenters, shipwrights, &c., and also as sailors on board the coasting vessels, which formerly were chiefly manned with slaves.

Contemplating these changes—the agricultural

slaves gradually acquiring wealth, intelligence, and a knowledge of religion — the personal slaves, as they may be called, gradually drawing to the plantations — and an increasing free population, rapidly engrossing all the mechanic and handicraft employment of the island — we have before us the pleasing prospect, that in Jamaica and at no very distant date, slavery will in a great measure be confined to the agricultural class, and these attached by circumstances, probably by law, to the plantations on which they are settled, and liable to be sold only along with the estates. If any thing can prevent or retard the accomplishment of this so desirable object, it will be the proceedings of the anti-slavery societies in England, and the constant agitation in parliament of questions which strike at the root of colonial existence. It is well known that since Mr. Buxton's celebrated motion in the House of Commons, on the 16th of May 1823, West India proprietors have been deterred from purchasing labourers for their estates, however much in want of them; and the consequence is, that many hundred negroes continue as jobbers, or the property of petty settlers, who would otherwise before now have been permanently and comfortably attached to the estates on which they are employed as temporary labourers.

To return from this digression. Though Mr. Stephen, in his usual strain of exaggeration, says, the slave codes in our islands are SINGULAR in denying

the humane and salutary right of redemption, p. 389, he himself informs us that slavery has not everywhere been redeemable, p. 378; and, indeed, from all he has been able to shew to the contrary, it would rather appear that in Europe slavery scarcely any where ever has been redeemable. He expressly tells us that the villeinage in England was not so, p. 120; he finds no express recognition of such a right in the servile laws of Rome, p. 378; and, on his own shewing, only nine out of the fifteen species of slavery in Hindostan appear to be redeemable. I notice our author's inconsistency here, not from any wish I have to be the advocate of irredeemable slavery, but merely as it marks the injustice the British colonists receive at his hands, and his disposition to represent negro slavery as singular in its severity, even on points where the contrary can be proved by his own authority.

Spanish law of Redemption considered.

The humane and liberal provision of the Spanish law, which gives the slave a right to redeem himself progressively, by paying one-sixth of his appreciated value for a day in the week, and so on for another day and another, as he acquires the means, till he effect his final manumission, does honour to the humane and benevolent heart that devised it; nor can I wonder to see all good men who take an interest in the subject, dwelling with complacency on so pleasing a view as it affords of the extinction of slavery. Who can contemplate such a picture in imagination, — the law encouraging, and the slave

meritoriously exerting himself to obtain freedom, — without wishing that such a law every where existed, and that the chains of slavery were every where thus loosened? But, alas! it is a picture in imagination only. I am yet to learn that *one* negro has ever benefited himself by it. To me, I confess, it appears altogether chimerical, from the difficulty of applying it to practice on the one hand, and the insensibility of the negroes to freedom, (unless with some means of subsistence to exempt them from labour,) on the other. Suppose, for instance, that a negro, valued at 120*l.*, pays 40*l.* to his master, two days in the week belong then to himself, and four to his master. This is all plain enough; but how are the other matters between them to be apportioned, food, clothing, medical attendance, use of land, taxes, &c.? It surely could not be expected that the master would continue to provide as fully for persons thus circumstanced, as for those whose entire labour was his own; and unless he countenanced their labours by hiring them on their purchased days, or by allowing them the use of his land, (and they can find a market for their produce,) it is difficult to see how their exertions could be of much avail. Moreover, we are not informed whether, in the case of the father of a family freeing himself, he is permitted by the law of Spain to continue on the domain, or must separate himself from his wife and family; nor whether, in the case of the wife only being freed, she is permitted to remain on

the estate with her husband to rear free children. These are difficulties, and many more might be added, which probably did not occur to the Spanish lawgiver; for it is an advantage possessed exclusively by the framers of laws for a foreign country, that seeing no difficulties they have none to overcome. And even if all these difficulties could be got over, still, from the much greater regard negroes attach to the money they acquire than to the mere possession of freedom in the abstract, which (happily perhaps) gives them little concern, if ever thought of at all, I am very confident they would never enter into a compact of this kind; and that any such proposition made to them by their master would be viewed as a scheme to get hold of their money. If I am wrong in my view of this subject, I shall rejoice to be corrected; and if it can be shewn that such a law has been carried into effect among the Africans in Cuba, the example surely ought to be followed in Jamaica. But, in the mean time, let neither the legislature nor the people of that island be condemned, because they have not in their slave code a regulation which, though specious in theory, they probably think could in practice be of no avail. The framers of this law in Spain, it will not be doubted, meant well, but knew little of the African's character. The same excuse could not be pleaded for the Jamaica Assembly if it made a useless law, although, if it was guided by the unworthy principles Mr. Stephen ascribes to it, and made specious acts merely to deceive the mother-country,

it might indulge him here, as this law would at least be harmless.

Some opinion may be formed of the indifference of the negroes to freedom from cases, and I have known several, of slaves who are themselves the owners of slaves, and could obtain their freedom by making over one of these to their master, but prefer keeping them, and remaining slaves themselves. Such cases Mr. Stephen, no doubt, will think rare indeed; they certainly are not common, yet not so rare, neither, as he may suppose. He will find on one estate where I resided as a book-keeper, — Holland, the property of Mr. Watson Taylor, — slave families, possessing among them between twenty and thirty slaves of their own, as many horses, at least, and twice as many asses. I remember once putting the question to one of the coopers, why he did not ask his master to take his slave, and get free himself? He answered, 'What 'good would *free* do me, to leave the house and the 'ground I have from massa, and lose my negro who 'works my ground for me?' If Mr. S., or any of his friends who are brooding over negro slavery, 'that terrible state of man,' will visit this property, it will much alleviate their sympathetic griefs: they will find in the houses of some of the people, sofas, mahogany bedsteads, and sideboards well furnished with cut glass and good liquors; a glass of Madeira wine, brown-stout, or brandy and water, I can promise them, from experience, will be at their service.

Slaves will not always buy their freedom when able. Their wealth.

This, of course, is only among the higher class of slaves; but the whole of them have houses perfectly comfortable for the climate, certainly much more so than those of a large part of the peasantry in this country. If the property which the slaves on Holland (in number about 600, young and old,) possess in horses, asses, pigs, poultry, furniture, and hoarded cash, could be realized, it would not be a bad purchase at the sum of 10,000*l.* I have frequently known them sell 50*l.* worth of plantains and yams in a morning, to one of the coasting vessels that supply the Kingston market. This, I allow, is the best case of the kind within my knowledge; but there are other properties in the immediate neighbourhood, especially Golden Grove, Hector's River, and Hordley estates, not very far behind it. A few years ago, a young man of colour deserted from the latter property, and went to England. After struggling a while to earn a subsistence in London, he managed to find out his master, Mr. Scott, who resided a few miles from town, and entreated permission to return to Jamaica as a slave. I saw a letter written by Mr. Scott to his agent in Jamaica, mentioning the application which had been made to him. I also saw a letter which the young man wrote to his mother, (or got some one to write for him,) and the picture he drew of the cold, the hard labour, and the many privations which he had to encounter in England, compared with the sunshine, the ease, and the plenty of Jamaica, was very striking.

In proof both of the wealth and good feeling found among the slaves, it deserves to be mentioned, that there have been instances of their tendering to their masters when in distress, the use of their money to the amount of 500*l.*, and even 1000*l.* I have myself had in hand, belonging to individual slaves, various sums, from 50*l.* to 300*l.*; and at the present moment hold, or did when I left Jamaica, 70*l.*, the property of a slave, who himself owns one or more slaves. I might also have mentioned, when speaking of the slaves on Holland estate, that they have, or had lately, a coasting-vessel, which they employed in carrying plaintains, yams, edoes, and corn, from the estate's wharf to Kingston, a distance coastwise of sixty to seventy miles. A return was brought in Irish salt-pork, butter, mackerel, cod-fish, linens, printed cottons, muslins, handkerchiefs, and crockery ware,—articles regularly retailed in the plantation villages. The register of the vessel, of course, was in the name of a free person. The accounts were often brought to my counting-house to be adjusted and proportioned.*

* When I was residing on Holland as a book-keeper, on an occasion when the proprietor, the late Mr. Simon Taylor, visited it with some friends, which always occasioned a considerable bustle in making preparations, a young man (Mr. Brice), who had charge of the stores as key-carrier, was so much annoyed with endless errands to go and give out this thing and that, that he presumed to bestow a curse on the house-woman, 'Old Dolly,' for the unnecessary trouble he thought she was giving him. The lecture she read him on the occasion astonished me; and it would have more astonished Mr. S., who thinks 'every negro or mulatto, even although free, is 'far more degraded below the lowest white person in Jamaica, than the poorest 'peasant in this country is below our nobility.' (p. 184.) It was to this effect, but uttered with a contempt which, to be conceived, must have been seen and heard: —'*You* a *poor* good-for-nothing Buckra, take upon yourself to curse *me!*' Whatra

Slavery of Hindostan.

To contrast the irredeemable slavery of the British West Indian colonies with the slavery of Hindostan, comprehending a variety of fifteen kinds, (p. 360,) Mr. Stephen selects that of the Gentoo, who, if he becomes a slave in consideration of his being fed, and thereby having his life preserved during a famine, is entitled (wonderful indulgence!) to redeem himself, on payment to his master of the value of the food he received in that time of necessity, '*with the addition of two head of cattle.*' (p. 381.) A greater picture of human misery scarcely could be drawn, and certainly could not be paralleled in Jamaica. Again, we are told, that 'the man who 'sells himself in consideration of the master en-'gaging to provide him with a subsistence, may ob-'tain his freedom by renouncing that subsistence in 'future.' (p. 381.) There was little need to go to Hindostan for a case of this kind, as every labourer in England is a slave on the same terms; but, after all, Mr. S. is not far wrong, for slavery and servitude are much the same under different regulations, each possessing some advantages and some disadvantages, but agreeing in the main point,—labour on the one part, for subsistence on the other.

Slavery of Africa.

Even the laws of the barbarous tribes in Africa

'you? Wharra make *you* come in'o massa plantation for n'yam (to eat)? Wharra! 'you talk so to *me!* Me have for me *house*, for me *ground*, for me *nigger*; where 'for *you* house, for *you* ground, for *you* nigger? Curse *me*, hey! Me see nough o' 'buckra, like o' *you*, come in'o massa plantation; but dem *gone*, and *you* will gone, 'if dem no carry you in o' quahill (the burial-ground.) Curse *me*, hey! You take 'something on yourself, true!'

are referred to by Mr. Stephen, to put the English colonists to shame:

'If the proper slavery of Africa,' says he, 'is, strictly speaking, like that of our colonies, irredeemable, it does not partake of those other terrible properties of the latter, perpetuity and transmission to the issue.' p. 384.

The slavery of Africa not transmitted to the issue! Since when? Mr. Park said, and every one else who has peeped into those unexplored and dreadful regions of slavery and darkness, says, that upwards of three-fourths of the whole population are slaves. If, however, slavery in Africa is no longer transmitted to the issue, we may hope it will soon cease, and that the great slave-shop of the world will speedily become a country of freemen.

'Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto,
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.'

'Sect. VIII.—Of Manumission.' p. 384.

Manumission. Presumption in favour of freedom.

This mode of enfranchisement is described as differing from the others, it being the voluntary act of the master, neither resulting from any legal right of redemption in the slave, nor compelled by any judicial or political authority.

The subject is introduced by a high panegyric on the liberality of the English courts, in favouring the cause of freedom in an age when that country had slaves of its own, and the legislature, the nobility, and gentry, were disposed to perpetuate the state. 'Professional pride prompts me,' says the learned gentleman, 'to dilate a little, and shew my country-

'men how much they owe to the humane and free-'spirited interpreters of our law. (p. 387.) Perhaps it did, but there was another object—contrast; for, continues he, 'in the British West India islands a 'very different course of things has taken place. 'There, the *petty* legislatures and the courts of law 'have vied with each other in hostility to freedom. 'The same relentless codes, which are singular in 'denying the humane and salutary right of redemp-'tion, are not less singular in their strictness as to 'voluntary manumission, and in the cruel restraints, 'not to say virtual prohibitions, recently imposed on 'it.' p. 389.

Manumission. Case of Mary Philips.

How unmerited this accusation is, needs not be told to those who have ever witnessed an action of *Homine Replegiando* brought before a court in Jamaica, the barristers volunteering their services, and the judges and jury scarcely concealing their leaning in favour of the suitor for freedom. This is not given on report. I have myself sat as a juror when several such cases were tried. The presumption of law is always in favour of freedom; and if it is made to appear that the person claiming is in equity entitled to it, such claim is held good, notwithstanding any informality in the manumission deed, or, in fact, the want of such a deed altogether. I was a juror, some years ago, in the case of a mulatto girl, named Mary Philips, of the parish of St. David, and county of Surrey, whose father had been some time dead. The mother of this girl originally belonged to a sugar es-

tate in the vicinity of Mr. Philips's residence; he had become attached to her, and purchased her, not to be held as a slave, but to be his house-keeper, and consequently to be manumised and provided for. On no other consideration would her master have parted with her. Several witnesses proved that they had heard Mr. Philips express himself to this effect, and that the woman was henceforth always reputed free. By his will he left her a few acres of land, and a specified sum of money to build a house; and to his daughter by her he left 700*l.* On a search among his papers after his death, no manumission-deed was to be found, nor was any such document on record. The executor felt, as it may be presumed most executors would, anxious to carry into effect the wishes of a friend who had imposed upon him this important duty. But here he had a formidable difficulty to encounter; for, according to the letter of the law, (and Mr. S. says it is even worse in practice than in letter,) both the mother and daughter were still slaves, and consequently themselves and their legacies the property of the residuary legatee.

In these circumstances, the mother and daughter came into court to have their freedom declared, and found no difficulty in establishing it. There prevailed but one feeling in the court, that whatever the law was, justice here was paramount. The simple fact that they had been reputed free in Mr. Philips's lifetime, and his having left them such a sum of money, was held conclusive evidence that he could not intend them to be slaves.

Can Mr. Stephen, or the Edinburgh Reviewers, reconcile this case, (and many such might be quoted,) *where there was no manumission deed at all,* with his assertion, which they repeat, that 'no implied or 'constructive enfranchisement is there in any case 'allowed: and that any flaw or defect in the instru- 'ment, or in the proof of its having been duly exe- 'cuted and registered, is fatal to a claim of free- 'dom.' (p. 390.) 'It may be notorious,' says the Review, 'that a negro or mulatto has been free since 'he first resided in the colony; that he has lived 'twenty years in England; that he is a citizen of 'Hayti or Columbia. All this is immaterial; if he 'cannot produce a deed of manumission he is liable 'to be put up to sale by public auction.' No. 82. p. 471.

So little truth is there in this, so diametrically opposite is public feeling, that if a slave is delivered to a plantation, and his name enrolled in the books of it, in the room of one intended to be manumitted, the proof of this fact would effectually accomplish the freedom of the person intended to be free, although the slave put in his place had died the following day, and no papers of any kind had passed between the parties.

Colonists unjustly accused of putting restraints on manumission.

'But,' continues Mr. Stephen, 'every former reproach on this head will be forgotten, when the reader shall be apprised of those recent and direct, though barbarous and unprecedented, restraints on manumission in many colonies, of which the story remains to be told. Before we proceed to contemplate these anomalies in legislative policy, it may be useful to point out their source.' p. 391.

'Their source' is, of course, the complexional difference, which our author has recourse to on all occasions to help him out with his charges against the colonists. His argument is this: the colonists 'hate and despise every man, woman, and child, 'with a black or yellow skin;' they entertain towards the whole of the African race 'a feeling at 'once contemptuous and jealous:' *ergo*, they oppose the manumission of all black and brown people.

'Such of the poor whites,' continues he, 'as earn their subsistence in the humbler walks of industry, or who live, as many of them do, in lazy indigence, regard with indignant eyes a free-coloured population increasing around them; following, and thereby disparaging, their own callings, and enjoying, perhaps, a degree of ease and comfort which they themselves cannot command.' p. 393.

Who these white people are who earn their subsistence 'in the humbler walks of industry,' whose callings are disparaged by the free-coloured population, we are at loss to know. Mechanics, and persons in the lower walks of commerce, are indeed particularized in a preceding page, as injured by, and from self-interest opposing, manumission. (p. 391.) But of the former, with the exception of watch-makers, I have scarcely known an instance of a white tradesman in Jamaica earning his bread by manual labour, so that he could be injured by the labour of the free-coloured people, even if they were more powerful competitors than they yet are in the field of enterprise and industry. Master ship-builders, masons, and carpenters, especially about towns, have frequently free young men of colour working

under them, both hired and as apprentices; but they, if affected in any way by the manumission of slaves, have an interest in its promotion, as they prefer hiring free people, when it can be done, to purchasing slaves.

Nineteen-twentieths, and upwards, of the houses in Kingston, Jamaica, are the property of free-coloured persons; all the public lodgings are kept by them, and all the petty retail trade is divided between them and the Jews, who of course possess no greater privileges. The same may be said of every town and village in the island; but who 'the poor whites' are whose interest is affected thereby, Mr. Stephen alone can explain.

That many of the white people in the colonies are sufficiently poor, is true enough, but they are not guilty of living in lazy indigence: on the contrary, their more active spirit is the main-spring of the industry of the country. They are engaged in the higher walks of commerce, in professions, and as masters in mechanical occupations, or are employed (which is the case of the majority) as superintendents in different departments on the plantations; and to suppose that they exert themselves to restrain manumission, lest their callings should be disparaged by the free-coloured population, is as absurd as to suppose that the poor whites, who earn their subsistence in the humbler walks of industry, or live in lazy indigence, *powerfully influence the insular legislatures!* (p. 393.)

Here Mr. Stephen has not merely concealed the

truth, but, as is not unusual with him, has given us the reverse of it. The restraining or facilitating of manumission by legislative acts, is a matter of little or no importance to the bulk of the white population, or only to such persons as have children to manumise, and who therefore have a clear interest in its being facilitated. To the owners of real property, who must look forward to more distant consequences, the question, whether or not a free-coloured population shall ultimately benefit them, is one of much importance, but one which time only can answer; and in the mean time, their agents of every description, who form the bulk of the white population, are daily adding to the numbers and wealth of that class. It would be a curious and interesting subject of investigation to ascertain how large a proportion of the earnings of the whole body of white colonists, (and yet they are accused, be it remembered, of restraining manumissions!) goes to purchase the freedom of slaves and to provide for them.

Manumission law of Jamaica considered.

After due preparation, we come at length to those 'recent and direct, though barbarous and unprecedented, restraints on manumission, the story of which will make every former reproach be forgotten.' In other words, we come to a consideration of the manumission law of Jamaica. The people of that island have perhaps some reason to be proud of the particular share of Mr. Stephen's attention, with which they are honoured in this instance and in several others, as it evidently is occasioned by the

difficulty he has found in impugning their laws, so as to counteract the favourable impression he was conscious they would produce on the mind of the British public, if candidly and attentively considered.

The only condition imposed on manumission by the law of Jamaica, is this: if a slave purchases freedom, if purchased for him by another, or voluntarily granted by his master, in either case, a security-bond must be lodged with the churchwardens of the parish, for a contingent annuity of 5*l.* currency, to be paid to the person so manumitted or freed, in the event of his becoming a public pauper. It is not required that the bond shall be given by the person who grants the manumission, but by any responsible free person, of any class or colour. The object of it is not, as Mr. Stephen asserts, to restrain manumission, but from motives of humanity, to prevent ill-disposed persons from setting free their old, infirm, and diseased slaves, to relieve themselves of the burthen of supporting them.

On the same principle, the law provides, that if a slave is freed by will, the estate of the testator is held responsible for this security; but in this case no security-bond is required.

It would be difficult to devise a regulation better calculated to permit manumission, and at the same time prevent the abuse of it; and of this truth no better evidence can be adduced than the futility of all the arguments our author has been able to bring against it. To absolute perfection no human institution can lay claim: nor can any laws, which the wis-

dom of man has yet devised, always restrain villany, although this is what would seem to be required of the colonists.

Speaking of testamentary manumissions, Mr. S. says:—

'Dishonest executors frequently dissent from such bequests, or withhold freedom from the legatees, on a false pretence that they have not assets to satisfy the debts of their testator.' p. 398.

Does Mr. Stephen know of any such cases? If so, he ought to have stated them, or at least some of them, in proof of his assertion. None such have ever come to my knowledge.

That a man should be just before he is generous, is a maxim in every country; and hence the law of Jamaica very properly denies a testator the right to manumise his slaves at the expense of his creditors. But Mr. Stephen even alleges that the helpless legatee is exposed to be levied upon and sold, and, consequently, for ever deprived of the means of obtaining his freedom, *however ample the estate may be* for the payment of the debts. p. 399.

This is too ridiculous to deserve a serious refutation; but from a Jamaica paper of the 19th of July 1824, now before me, I copy the following report of a case decided in the Assize Court, which shews, that instead of the 'helpless legatee' being subject to be sold, 'however ample the estate,' his freedom has been established even where the estate was insolvent:—

'July 10th.—Grape *v.* Andrews. This was an action of *homine replegiando.* The question was, whether the plaintiff was free under

the will of his master, whose estate was insolvent. It was contended that he was free, which could not be affected by any demand against his master, that had not been on judgment previous to the will being recorded. Verdict Guilty. Damages, 7½*d.* with costs; thereby establishing the freedom of the plaintiff.'

It is almost unnecessary to remark, that Mr. Stephen's assumed difficulties are at variance with all the common principles of conduct among mankind. Executors are always the intimate friends of the testator, and will therefore, it may be presumed, feel disposed to carry his wishes into effect, more especially in giving freedom to a deserving and favourite slave, with whom the chances are that they are themselves acquainted, and by injuring whom it is utterly impossible they can benefit themselves. According to Mr. Stephen, the very contrary must be supposed, that not one only, but all the executors, and there are never less than two or three, are alike void of honesty and humanity. If men are assumed to be villains, nothing can be easier than to give plausibility to a charge of their committing any particular act of villany. Yet, even granting that the executors were really as unprincipled as Mr. S. supposes, there is, after all, a difficulty which they would scarcely be able to surmount. The slave left free by his master never can be ignorant of that fact, as the will must be proved and recorded before it can be acted upon; and this, since the Act of 1816, is all that is required to establish the freedomo f the slave in any court of law.

The object of the security-bond, as already stated, is to prevent ill-disposed persons from casting the

burthen of supporting their old and infirm slaves on the parishes. Mr. Stephen, endeavouring to represent this as a restraint upon manumission, thus argues: —

'Upon ordinary principles of action, a master might be expected to pause when called on to enter into such an obligation, though otherwise willing to give up or sell at its value his right to the future services of the slave.' p. 410.

The master is not required to enter into such an obligation, he has only to sign the manumission-deed, which is a full conveyance of freedom. The obligation required, may be granted by any responsible free person, of any colour, and lodged with the churchwardens, previous to putting the manumission-deed on record.

Again, arguing that the object of the bond could not be what the Assembly states it, (to prevent old and infirm slaves from being cast upon the parishes,) our author asks, 'who would not rather be bound to 'pay an annuity for the life of an old, infirm, and 'helpless man or woman, than for one in the prime 'of youth, and of a sound and vigorous habit?' p. 410. Very true; but it is not an annuity that is required, but *security* for an annuity, in case the freed slave should become a pauper; and, to reverse Mr. Stephen's question, who would not rather grant this security for one in the prime of youth, and of a sound and vigorous habit, than for an old, infirm and helpless man or woman?

'Besides,' continues he, 'the master has to gain something in the one case, by getting rid of an incumbrance; whereas, in the other, he has to give up his property in an able and valuable slave.' p. 410.

The law very properly guards against his getting rid of such an incumbrance, except by giving the bond in question; and he will himself guard against giving up his property in an able and valuable slave, without being paid for it. Out upon such quibbling!

'The assembly, however, in telling us that the Act is so liberally executed as not to restrain manumission, gives up in effect its defence of the Act itself; for to restrain manumission *is its object*; and if they are not restrained, the object is lost, and the Act is at least useless.' p. 411.

It has already been shewn that the object of the Act is to prevent diseased, ill-disposed, and infirm slaves from being manumitted, and thus cast upon the parishes, by masters who are bound by law to support them; and so far it certainly does restrain, and was intended to restrain, manumissions, upon principles of humanity and justice. That it 're-'strains the manumission of the young and able, as 'much as the impotent and old,' is a proposition founded on the assumption already noticed, that the impotent and old are no more likely to become public paupers, and, consequently, can as easily procure security against such a probable casualty as the young and able. If a master manumits an ill-disposed or a diseased slave, he must necessarily himself give the bond, as it is certain no other person will. Here the law acts, and very properly, as a restraint. If, on the other hand, and here is the discrimination, I purchase from him a young and healthy person whom I wish to manumit, or if such

person has the means of purchasing his own freedom, all that is required of the master is to execute the manumission-deed, and any person, (for in this case it is in fact a mere matter of form,) will give his security for a slave who is freed through favour and provided for, or who is known to possess sufficient capacity to maintain himself; 'without which,' as Mr. Stephen himself justly remarks, 'freedom would 'be the reverse of a benefit.' p. 397. I have myself given many such bonds, and considered them of so very little importance that I have not even kept a memorandum of them. I have never known a case where value was lodged for such a bond, or where one of them has been estreated.*

It would be superfluous to enlarge farther on the subject, having shewn the object of this Act to be in reality what the critic himself contends it ought to be, not to restrain manumission, but to 'prevent the 'freeing of those who are destitute and unable to 'maintain themselves, and to whom, therefore, free-'dom would be the reverse of a benefit,' p. 397; while to the public, the support of them would become a ruinous burthen, more oppressive even than the poor-rates in England.

By a late Act of Assembly, (1824,) it would appear that even the security-bond is now dispensed with, 'provided the slave intended to be manu-

* The only tax upon manumissions in Jamaica, for years past, has been a 20*s.* stamp for the security-bond, (the same as for other bonds,) 5*s.* stamp for the manumission-deed, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for the parish certificate; in all, 27*s.* 6*d.* currency. And these are the 'restraints by enormous taxes, and other means,' p. 438, which the legislature of this island has put upon manumissions.

'mised, shall be produced to the magistrates and 'vestry of the parish, or it shall be otherwise shewn 'to their satisfaction, that the manumission is not 'given for the purpose of relieving the owner from 'the obligation of maintaining an aged or infirm 'slave.'

The only benefit that can result from this new regulation, will be the saving of the 20*s.* stamp for the bond, which will reduce the 'enormous' expense of manumission in Jamaica to 7*s.* 6*d.* currency. The Act, however, had another and a more important object: 'to remove impediments to the manumission 'of slaves, by owners having only a limited interest;' and has obviated the only obstacle to voluntary manumissions that existed, namely, that which was occasioned by entails and mortgages, fettered by which, the owner or person in possession of slaves had it no more in his power to manumise than to sell them. This Act affords another proof of the truth of what Mr. Stephen asserts, that 'the petty 'legislatures and the courts of law in our colonies 'have vied with each other in hostility to freedom. p. 389.

Even without this Act, individuals sometimes got over the difficulty occasioned by entails and mortgages, in the following manner. The slave intended to be manumised was passed over by the owner or person in possession, (with the sanction of the mortgagee,) to the collector of taxes, and another of equal value put in his place; a nominal sale was then made by the collector, as if the slave to

be manumised had been levied on for taxes; and as the title which the purchaser got was unimpeachable, he was thus enabled to grant freedom to the slave.

The truth is, that, of late years, every facility has been afforded to manumissions in Jamaica, and the fact, that the free coloured population in the island has increased from ten thousand to thirty-five thousand since 1787, is alone sufficient to discredit all the stories which have been so sedulously propagated in England about the colonists reducing free persons to slavery, — the 'recent and cruel re-'straints, not to say virtual prohibitions, put on ma-'numissions,' &c.

'Sect. IX.—Enfranchisement by public authority.' p. 420. Rome and Grenada.

'In Greece or Rome,' says Mr. Stephen, 'if a 'slave was instrumental in the discovery or sup-'pression of a public crime, or distinguished him-'self by fidelity in civil convulsions, freedom was 'the rich reward.' Of course it is not mentioned by our author that such services by slaves have been similarly rewarded in Jamaica, not once, but often. Even last session of Assembly, several slaves had freedom conferred on them 'for their faithful and 'meritorious services' during the late troubles; and, I believe, on every occasion of insurrection that has taken place in the island, some of the negroes have been found to merit, and have received for their fidelity, the reward of freedom, with a pension for life.

We are next informed that the Spartans and Romans, those gentle slave masters, when urgent necessity required, purchased slaves for their armies, who were forthwith enfranchised; and this is brought forward to draw a comparison between the feelings of Christian and English slave masters, and those of pagan antiquity; 'resulting as usual,' says our author, 'much to the disadvantage of the former.' The states of Rome and Sparta paid the masters of the slaves thus enrolled their value, and enfranchised them, or perhaps kept them soldier-slaves, as has been the fate of Africans at Sierra Leone. Now mark the difference: a few individuals in a petty West India island, Grenada, dependent on the crown of Great Britain, were, at an urgent moment, compelled to arm a portion of their own slaves for a few weeks, to oppose a foreign invader, and,—'oh, what a falling off was there,'—did not enfranchise them, as imperial Rome would have done! Why, if this ought to have been their reward, whose duty was it to enfranchise them, that of the planters, or of the crown?

Black Troops.

Next follows an eulogy on the black troops, whom the colonists considered rather dangerous inmates, and of which, indeed, there was too convincing proof not long ago in Jamaica. But Mr. Stephen, who is of course a better judge of these matters than the colonists, maintains that those alarms were entirely groundless, and says, 'it may be inferred, from many facts, that 'the jealousy which the white colonists

'profess of such defenders, is, in a great measure, a 'mere cloak for their proud contempt and antipathy 'towards the African race!' p. 429.

The peaceable and beneficent spirit of the anti-colonists.

Why Mr. Stephen and his party might wish to see such soldiers in the colonies, may perhaps be gathered from some expressions in pages 429 and 430 of his work, where he speaks of 'the most effectual 'means of revolution' in the colonies, and doing all he can to set one class against another, and stir up insurrection, very consistently proclaims his intentions to be '*peaceable and beneficent*.'* What can have given birth to such rancorous animosity it is impossible to conjecture; but from these, as well as many other passages in his book, it is very clear, that if he would not actually rejoice to hear of 'the knife 'being at the throats' of his countrymen in the colonies, he is, at least, like the Edinburgh Reviewers, perfectly indifferent to such an event.† In his Preface, he does not even disguise the satisfaction it would afford him to see

> 'A godly-thorough-reformation
> By fire and sword and desolation;'

telling us, that 'if the *ostensible* improvements made 'by the colonial assemblies were carried into prac- 'tice, they would be CHEAPLY purchased at the 'expense of greater temporary evils BY FAR than 'the insurrections of Demarara and Barbadoes;'

* See extract from his work, *sup.* p. 229.

† Vide Ed. Rev. No. 82. p. 481.

and again, that 'the independency of these sugar 'colonies, or their transfer to a foreign power, would 'be a rich boon to the people of England.'

In a former work, he declared that the shocking slavery in our islands could not much longer be maintained; but that, 'by a just and rational policy, 'we might be enabled to look forward to the pro-'gress, not only of African freedom, but even Afri-'can sovereignty, in the West Indies, with satisfac-'tion rather than dismay.' And in the same spirit, we find the 'African sovereignty' of St. Domingo always mentioned with admiration in the present work. Thus, while treating with marked derision the value of the British West India islands in their present state, and contemplating their independence with much complacency, he observes, that 'among 'many other advantages resulting from it, we should 'regain and engross *the very valuable commerce* of 'Hayti, which, in complaisance to Jamaica, we have 'foolishly renounced.' Pref. p. 32.

Nor can we much wonder that the advocates of the slaves, as they call themselves, should thirst for the blood of the unfortunate colonists, or call down fire from heaven upon them, if they really in their hearts believe them to be such monsters as they have described. As to their disavowal of any desire 'to inflame popular indignation and stir up 'insurrection in the colonies,' it stands, perhaps, upon the same ground as their solemn disavowal, only a few years ago, of having in contemplation any

such mad scheme as the emancipation of the slaves, which is now their professed object.* They have brought it forward in Parliament, established societies to promote it, and, in the fury of enthusiasm, have openly avowed that any measures will be justifiable to accomplish so good an end.—

> The people shall be free!
> Free by what means?—by folly, madness, guilt;
> By bounteous rapines, blood in oceans spilt,—
> By confiscation;—
> By laws, religion, morals, all o'erthrown:
> Rouse then, ye sovereign people, claim your own!

It is not improbable that our author may live to see the island of Jamaica, one of the richest gems of the British crown, in the possession of a foreign power, or under African sovereignty; and if he does, he will then, no doubt, have the satisfaction of seeing his labours, in accomplishing this 'rich boon' for the people of England, more correctly appreciated than they at present are.

Mr. Stephen's contradictory statements regarding the People of Colour.

In writing these comments upon Mr. Stephen's work, it has more than once occurred to me, that they cannot be very necessary to intelligent and dispassionate readers; as such, though they have never

* In a letter addressed to Mr. Smith, in 1813, Mr. Stephen distinctly disavows any idea of meditating the emancipation of the slaves. 'Mr. Marryatt says, that 'he was before aware, that I, like Mr. Wilberforce, designed the emancipation of 'the slaves. This renewal of *a stale and idle charge* against Mr. Wilberforce, seems 'as much out of time as out of place. But I am not surprised, nor indeed much 'concerned, that if he should believe Mr. Wilberforce capable of entertaining a pur- 'pose, which *he has publicly disclaimed*, he should form the same judgment of me.'

been in the colonies, and may be unable from personal knowledge to detect the mis-statement of facts, cannot fail to discover the contradictions involved in his invectives against the colonists. The inconsistency of his statements regarding the free people of colour, with the tyranny which, he says, the whites exercise over them, is so striking, that it is hardly possible it can escape the observation of the most inattentive reader. In the first place, we are informed that the Assemblies 'have sanctioned every 'source of slavery to which private fraud or violence 'may resort,' p. 371; that 'the laws require no 'proof of the servile state beyond the colour of the 'skin,' p. 390; that 'there is abundant reason to 'believe free negroes are often deprived of their 'liberty,' p. 369; and that 'the plainest principles 'of policy and justice are wantonly violated, merely 'that the profitable privileges and pre-eminence of 'the white oligarchists may not be surrendered or 'abridged,' p. 429. After this, and there is much more to the same effect, can any reader, without surprise, learn from the same authority, that 'the free 'people of colour are *increasing*, that they follow the 'callings of the whites, and enjoy a degree of ease 'and comfort which many of these cannot themselves command,' p. 393; that 'indigence among 'them has always been extremely rare, when compared with its prevalence among the white population,' p. 395; and that though liable to be deemed and taken as slaves, 'in any manner to which private 'malice or fraud may resort,' they have nevertheless

become an important and powerful class?' p. 431. This, surely, is somewhat paradoxical; but the wonder does not end here; for we find, that while the 'white oligarchists' are oppressing the free coloured class, 'in a manner,' (to borrow our author's words,) 'which human despotism never attempted or ima-'gined before,' p. 371, they are so far from having any apprehension of their dissatisfaction and revolt, that, instead of disarming them, (as other tyrants have been careful to do those they oppressed,) they have all the adult males of this powerful and numerous class *trained to arms*, p. 430; and this, too, at a time when they are driving to desperation an overwhelming number of slaves, by 'a system, uniting 'in itself every species of oppression that has else-'where existed under the sun, and with many ag-'gravations.' p. 435.

Such is the consistent account Mr. Stephen gives of the circumstances of the people of colour, and their oppression by the whites. The truth is, that this class labours under certain political disabilities, like the Roman Catholics in this country. These have already been in part done away, and, no doubt, will continue to be progressively removed, as the coloured people become capable of partaking of the privileges at present withheld, with advantage to themselves and to the colony. The many fruitless discussions there have been in Parliament on the Catholic question, shew how great caution is used even here in extending political privileges, and the task is scarcely less difficult in adjusting this point in the colonies.

A chapter was promised 'on those recent ostensi-'ble reformations of slavery, called the meliorating 'acts,' but it is deferred; 'the intended strictures 'on them having been partly anticipated under the 'different titles to which many of their provisions 'relate:' and a more comprehensive review of them reserved for the second division of the work, when the acts, which our author understands to be under consideration in the colonies, shall have made their appearance. 'Meantime,' continues he, 'it will be 'doing no injustice to the colonies to defer the notice 'of such specious provisions of those meliorating 'acts, already presented to Parliament, as have not 'naturally fallen under review: since their ineffici-'ency, and the utter neglect of them in practice, 'has, I trust, been sufficiently shewn, to satisfy the 'reader as to their general character and effect.' p. 431.

Mr. Stephen's acknowledged omission of the recent Meliorating Acts.

Had Mr. Stephen intended his readers to exercise any judgment of their own on the subject he professes to treat,—slavery *as it exists* in the colonies,—it might have occurred to him, that some of them would, probably, have considered it fully as important to be made acquainted with the meliorating acts, '*already presented to Parliament*,' as with those laws which have been a hundred years obsolete.

Apologising for sending out this part of his work before the whole had been completed, he promises that an account of the state of slavery, in its practical character, shall appear in a second volume, 'un-'less speedy and substantial reformation of the state

'shall happily supersede the necessity of these dis-
'cussions, before his time and strength enable him,
'compatibly with other duties, to redeem this pledge
'in an adequate and satisfactory way.' p. 432.

This is impossible; fault will be found with any laws that can be passed in the colonies; or, if their humanity is undeniable, they will be said, as the present confessedly humane laws are said, to be 'inefficient and utterly neglected in practice.' The *philanthropist*, therefore, had better continue his praiseworthy labours, (while his time and strength enable him,) preserving, as no doubt he will, the same candour and regard to truth which are so conspicuous in the volume he has published.

He tells us in his Preface, that he has a 'copious 'collection of particular instances of cruelty and op-'pression.' (p. 44.) We hope he will publish them, with the names and the authorities on which they rest, that they may, if possible, be investigated, and that it may be seen what credit is due to his general charges, by an examination of the individual cases from which they are drawn. But we are doubtful if a second volume is really intended, or if this is only an artifice. Having charged the colonists with almost every crime known among mankind, vilified them with every term of reproach that language affords, he promises another volume, merely, perhaps, to have it believed that, after all, he has told only half their crimes!

In the mean time, he recommends to his readers

'a late work called Negro Slavery, from which,' says he, 'they will learn what are the practical fruits 'of such a shocking institution.' It is needless to say the work is of the same stamp with his own, and probably the production of some of his 'very esti- 'mable and much-respected friends.'

Dr. Collins's Practical Rules.

He also recommends Dr. Collins's *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves in the Sugar Colonies*, which he describes as a work neglected by the colonists, and cited by their opponents. 'If the West India proprietors,' says he, 'were as intent on promoting the preserva- 'tion and well-being of their slaves, as they ought 'and profess to be, this book would not have been 'suffered to be out of print. I therefore regret that 'copies of it cannot be very easily obtained; and 'hope that some of those who share my opinions and 'feelings in this great cause, will soon supply the 'defect.' p. 434.

In the conclusion, however, he acknowledges an error here, having learned that the work is not out of print, as he had supposed; and that the credit of a new edition of it is not due to any of those who share his opinions and feelings in this great cause.

In the mind of any reasonable person, is it to be considered discreditable to the colonists, that abuses in their system have been openly acknowledged and reprobated by themselves, as a means of amend- ment? Or is it reasonably to be assumed, as Mr. Stephen does when he refers to this work in support

of his charges, that because abuses existed, and were reprobated by Dr. Collins, of St. Vincent, twenty-five or thirty years ago, they therefore exist still? When Dr. Collins's work first fell into my hands, (I think in 1805,) I found sentiments in it which greatly strengthened previous impressions of my own, especially as to the impropriety of permitting the drivers to exercise over the slaves an authority and power which was doubtless sometimes made subservient to the gratification of personal resentment. In making this acknowledgment, truth equally compels me to say, that this system of management, not less opposite to the interest of the master than injurious to the slave, is now universally reprobated and exploded. People at work must have over them a superintendent, or driver, as he is called; but any stretch of power on his part in inflicting punishment, would now be the certain forfeiture of his rank, and occasion the dismissal of the overseer who should permit it. But as the anti-colonists maintain that every abuse which ever had existence in the colonies exists still, so every report circulated in confirmation of such abuses, whether now or a hundred years ago, is to have full credit as proof against the present colonists, while every testimony to the contrary is to be treated as false, and regarded, like the meliorating laws, as intended merely to impose on the British public. Hence Mr. Stephen's recommendation of the work entitled 'Negro Slavery;' hence his assumption that the abuses Dr. Collins reprobated, and which Mr. S.

himself might have seen in the island of St. Christopher, and reprobated thirty or forty years ago, are still in existence; hence also his anxiety to disparage and discredit B. Edwards's excellent History of the West Indies, by representing 'its main object 'to have been to palliate the colonial system;' and calling its author 'the apologist, champion, accre-'dited agent, &c., of the colonists.'

With respect to Dr. Collins's work, no testimony more creditable to it (and it is no less so to the planters) can be adduced than the fact, that it is in the hands of every intelligent overseer in Jamaica, and highly valued by them as a guide. Let the reader judge, then, with what fairness it has been attempted to turn this excellent work against the colonists, 'as neglected by them,' and cited by their opponents. From my own knowledge of negro slavery, as it existed twenty-two years ago, I have no doubt Dr. Collins's censures were too well merited, and there may be enough to find fault with yet. But let the truth be told: a great change has since taken place, so great, that his work could give no just idea of the state of things now existing, at least in Jamaica. Yet Mr. Stephen, speaking of the present times, says, 'I am 'far from admitting that the practice of slavery is, 'in general, no worse than that essay would lead 'the European reader to suppose it to be.' p. 434. Has any book but his own ever made it bad enough?

St. Christopher's forty years ago.

We have now arrived at the Appendixes to Mr. Stephen's work, and on these it will be unnecessary

to dwell long, as in general they have little reference to the present condition of the negroes.

No. 1. gives an account of four cases of cruelty which occurred about forty years ago in the island of St. Christopher. They are certainly very atrocious; but crimes have been committed in all countries, not in the West Indies only: and bad as these cases are, they could easily be paralleled from the criminal records of any country without going back forty years, I may say, from the English newspapers of almost any week in the year.

What is chiefly worthy of notice in the account of these acts of barbarity, is the different light in which the colonists appear when our author comes *to speak of matters of fact from his own knowledge*. Who, after the detail of horrors and cruelties summed up in the concluding chapter, in which the slaves are represented as being 'degraded to the level of brute and 'inanimate nature,'— as 'doomed to the slave chain 'of the workhouse for life, often for acts in their 'nature innocent,' and suffering in short under a 'system uniting in itself every species of oppression 'that has elsewhere existed under the sun, and with 'many aggravations;' who, I say, after reading this, or indeed any chapter of the book, but must be astonished to learn from this Appendix that, forty years ago, the killing of a slave was held by the Court of St. Christopher's to be felony: that the mutilation of a slave subjected the perpetrator to a fine of £500 currency; and that two miscreants who had been guilty of atrocities of this kind were pro-

secuted and convicted? Above all, who would expect to find that in those days even, when the slave trade kept the Negro population in a state of barbarism, and when the laws and perhaps the customs, were comparatively harsh to what they now are, there nevertheless were so many redeeming characters in the colonies? Not to mention our author himself, who then adorned the little town of Basseterre, St. Christopher's, we learn on his authority that the public were alive to cries of distress—that a humane constable did his duty—that liberal and intelligent magistrates did theirs—that gentlemen of the faculty bore testimony to the truth—that the provost marshal was a man of spirit and humanity—that judges supported humanity and resisted oppression; and finally, that juries, although composed of various characters, had among them some who felt the obligations of law and justice.

Slavery of Africa.

The Appendix No. 2. consists principally of extracts from evidence taken before a Committee of the Privy Council, when the abolition question was under consideration, and the selections are made to bear out a favourite theory of our author's, regarding the state of slavery among the various tribes of Africa. On this subject I shall content myself with giving the report which I have heard from the many African Negroes I have questioned regarding their native country. '*Guinea good—but country fight country, and kill kill too much—wish to go back? no.*

Removal of Slaves from one island or colony to another.

The Appendix No. 3. contains the sequel of Mr. Stephen's argument against permitting the removal of slaves, under any circumstances, from one island or colony to another: and to much that he says on this subject I cordially subscribe. Cases there certainly may be, where the welfare of the Negroes themselves would be promoted by a removal from some of the confined, sterile islands, to the larger and more fertile; but, unless in such cases, humanity pleads strongly against their removal, and it certainly ought not to be permitted. Most objectionable of all is the removing them from the islands to extend cane cultivation on the continent, or in the swamps of our late *valuable* acquisition, the island of Trinidad; for, if this system is allowed, there can be no end to removals, no end to slavery. To permit it, is to afford to selfish masters the means of enriching themselves by sacrificing the comfort and happiness of their slaves, and to give them an advantage over the more humane owners, who choose rather to continue to cultivate a poor soil, than sacrifice or endanger the happiness, and perhaps the lives of their people, by removing them to new settlements. The feelings of the white people in the colonies, Mr. S. himself (not prone to make such admissions) allows here to be on the side of humanity. Speaking of the sufferings which such removals occasion to the slaves, he says, 'Nor are these opinions opposite to the feelings and 'wishes of our West Indian fellow-subjects at large. 'On the contrary, such removals of slaves are sub-'jects of great commiseration and regret among the

'white inhabitants of the islands from which they 'are sent. Since I began these strictures on the 'practice, private accounts have reached my ears 'from the Leeward Islands, of two shipments of 'slaves for Trinidad, in which the misery and despair 'of the poor expatriated victims excited not only a 'lively sympathy, but indignation, pretty loudly ex-'pressed against the unfeeling masters.' p. 455.

The West India Colonies represented by Mr. S. as a great evil to the mother country.

Appendix No. 4. contains extracts from memorials and petitions of the Jamaica assembly to the King and Parliament, pourtraying the distressed state of the colony at various periods, from which the following conclusion is drawn: 'that the losses 'and failures which they (the colonies) produce in 'the mother country, are of a most enormous extent, 'and have tended more than all other causes to de-'teriorate the general character of British commerce, 'and to entail ruin upon families out of trade, as well 'as individual merchants.' p. 447. Therefore that the possession of the colonies, instead of being a benefit, is an absolute loss to the country.

This surely is not a little paradoxical. Here we have the richest portion of the globe cultivated with its most valuable products, the result of which, according to Mr. Stephen, is certain destruction to the proprietors—starvation to the labourers—bankruptcy to the merchants—deterioration to the very character of British commerce, and ruin to the state.

How much mistaken Adam Smith, and the many

other economists must have been, who fancied that the cultivation of the earth formed the great source of wealth among mankind, when Mr. Stephen is now to prove to demonstration, that the cultivation of the British colonies, the produce of which amounts by Colquhoun's calculations, to upwards of sixteen millions and a half yearly, and gives employment to seven or eight hundred merchant ships in war and in peace, instead of being a benefit, is a positive evil; nay, a great misfortune to the empire! Those silly men had not even a glimpse of the discovery which the more profound political economists of the present day have made, that 'Britain, by being rid of her 'ruinous West Indian possessions, will save two mil-'lions a year, and the lives of multitudes of her brave 'soldiers and seamen' (Pref. p. 32), who henceforth may stay at home, as her flag need never again be seen among the Antilles. Moreover, she will also save the lives of thousands of her enterprising sons, now unprofitably engaged in cultivating the fields of Jamaica, and falling victims to its baneful climate; while sugar will be raised in abundance in Cuba and the Brazils, by the humane slave-trading Spaniards and Portuguese, who will not only cultivate it for us, but, perhaps, take the trouble of carrying it also; which will be another advantage, as it is now discovered that merchant ships are as little necessary to the country as colonies. 'For,' says the Edinburgh Review, 'the navy of Great Britain might be as for-'midable as it now is, or, if that was desirable, infi-

'nitely more so, though we had not a single merchant 'ship.' No. 84, p. 297.

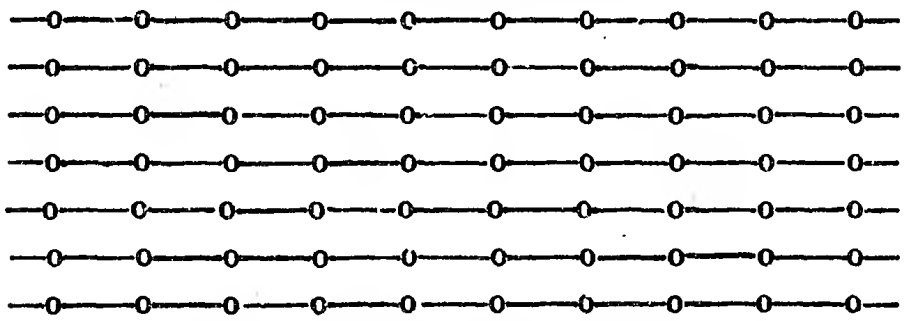
Respecting the gain or loss which Great Britain has had by the possession of her West India colonies, very erroneous conclusions have been drawn from premises not liable to dispute. The colonies are valued at so many millions;—all that, then, was capital advanced by the mother country and withdrawn from other more profitable employment. No such thing;—by far the greater part has been acquired in colonial commerce, and embarked upon the soil and industry from which it arose; and far more capital has been withdrawn from the colonies, and laid out upon the soil of the mother country, than has moved in the contrary direction; whence otherwise the *Morants, Dawkins, Pennants, Beckfords, Taylors, Lascelles, &c. &c. &c.?* Again we have numerous complaints from the colonists both at home and abroad, of the hardships and disadvantages which they have to encounter, and these are unquestionably well founded. Oh, then, it is plain that the cultivation of the colonies is a losing speculation, ruinous to those embarked in it, and a sacrifice of capital by the empire! Why not then pronounce the same of British agriculture? Compare the petitions and memorials of the growers of corn in Great Britain with those of the growers of sugar in the colonies, and either condemn the agriculture in both as a waste of capital and labour; or admit that each has been on the whole the source of wealth and

property, though labouring occasionally under temporary difficulties.

Appendix No. 5. contains a description of the *driving system*, extracted from a pamphlet written by Mr. Stephen twenty-two years ago, called the *Crisis of the Sugar Colonies*. The labour selected to give effect to this description is holeing a cane piece, that is, turning up the ground with hoes for the reception of the cane plants; which when done gives it the appearance of a field drilled for turnips, the drills or holes 4 or 5 feet wide; the cane is planted in the furrow in the same manner as potatoes. This labour is always done with the plough, when the land will admit, but on steep hill-sides, stony, or low swampy ground where a number of large trenches must be kept open to draw off the water, the hoe must be used. The richer the soil of a plantation, the less of this labour is required, as canes continue to grow, or ratoon, as it is called, from the same root, for five, ten, or even twenty years; consequently only a small proportion of the field requires to be replanted each season. On the Driving System.

Mr. Stephen's description of the driving system, he thinks, 'made a strong impression on some minds, 'but its effect was taken off, by the bold contradic-'tion given to the statement in point of fact:' and no wonder it was contradicted; for never was a grosser misrepresentation put forth. Holeing a cane piece is the only hard field-work a negro has to perform; cleaning of canes is much the same kind of labour as

hoeing a field of turnips, or potatoes, at which a youth of fifteen can do as much as a man of thirty. At holeing, therefore, able people only are employed; while the old, the young, and the weakly, are more advantageously occupied at lighter work. In no way would it be possible to equalize the strength of labourers to such a nicety, as to make them advance, as Mr. S. asserts they must, when digging cane holes, 'in a line like troops on a parade;' nor would this be of any earthly use for the proper performance of the work. The trenches or drills are marked off from one end of the field to the other, with pegs stuck in the ground, at the distance of four feet, which at the same time mark the cross sections thus:



The negroes work across the field, moving backwards from one peg or trench to another; and each having his own distinct section, a person of superior strength following his own, may advance before the others if he pleases, and rest till they come up; and, therefore, as at any other work, the able and willing are commonly in advance, while the weak and the lazy follow in the rear. Generally, however, as in a harvest field at home, a man and a woman are placed together, and work two sections jointly, thus equalizing the strength of the two.

So much for the truth of Mr. Stephen's description,—'no breathing time to be allowed; the necessity of every hole or section being finished in 'equal time with the others, and the urging on to 'equal speed with the whip the male or female, old 'or young, weak or strong, so as to dress in line 'like troops on a parade!'

In this, as in many other instances, our author is not more at variance with truth than with common sense. What would be thought of a farmer in England, who, in cutting down a field of wheat, should allot an equal extent to the old and the feeble as to his ablest labourers, and order them all to advance in parade style? Is it not evident that one or two old or feeble persons, even if urged on to destruction, must infallibly retard all the others? and yet this is exactly what it is alleged the farmers of the West Indies do! A body of negroes may commence the first trench together, but I affirm, that neither Mr. Stephen, nor any other person, ever saw them finish even one section at the same time, much less continue to fall back for a whole day in line.

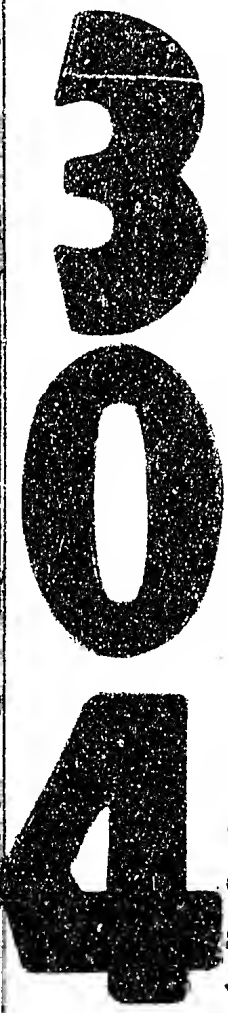
Carrying canes from the field to the mill by negroes, which is mentioned in *The Crisis*, is a thing I have never seen; nor does such a practice, I presume, now exist in any of the colonies, as the price of sugar would not repay such an enormous expence of manual labour. In Jamaica the canes are carried by mules upon hilly estates, and in carts drawn by oxen in the plains. The practice of making the negroes, when returning from the field at night, pro-

cure and carry home with them a bundle of grass for the overseer's stable, was also obsolete before my time. I have often heard it spoken of, and always reprobated as a hardship to the negroes, which the value of the object did not at all compensate. Mules are now employed to do this; and as the negroes return home at night or at dinner-time, every industrious individual may be seen laden with a bundle of firewood, hog-meat vine, or cane tops for the use of his hogsty; unless in situations near the sea or a river, where many of them go to examine their *fish-pots*, or traps, which they are ingenious in constructing, and with which they catch a great quantity of fish. There can scarcely in any country be a more pleasing sight than a group of young negroes returning home from the field in the evening, dancing together on the road, singing, laughing, and making such a noise as in the serenity of a West India evening, may be heard at the distance of a mile.

Houses and Gardens of the Negroes, their Mode of Life, &c.

THE most common size of the negro houses is 28 feet long by 14 broad. Posts of hard wood about 9 feet long, or 7 above ground, are placed at a distance of two feet from one another, and the space between is closely wattled up and plastered. The roof is covered with the long mountain-thatch, palmeto-thatch, or dried guinea-grass, either of which is more durable than the straw thatch used in this country. Cane tops are also used for the purpose, but are not so lasting. To throw off the rain the thatch is brought down a considerable distance over the walls, which in consequence look low, and the roof high. The house is divided into three, and sometimes four apartments. The room in the middle occupying the whole breadth of the house, has a door on each side, to admit a circulation of air. This is the sitting apartment, and here the poorer class make fire and cook their victuals; the more wealthy have a separate kitchen at a little distance. The smaller houses have the sitting room in one end, and two sleeping apartments in the other.

Behind the house is the garden, filled with plantains, ochras, and other vegetables, which are produced at all seasons. It abounds also with cocoa-nut and calabash trees. A good cocoa-nut will be a meal to a man, and boiled among the sugar (which the negroes frequently do), would be feast to an epicure.



It contains also about a pint of a delicious juice, called, '*cocoa-nut milk*;' the leaves, which are thick, and twelve or fifteen feet long, are shed occasionally all the year round, and not only make excellent fuel, but are sometimes used for thatch. The nut also yields oil for lamps, and the shell is made into cups. Thus one tree affords meat, drink, fuel, thatch, oil for lamps, and cups to drink out of! No wonder it is so great a favourite that every negro village looks at a distance like a cocoa-nut grove. Nor are these the only uses of this singularly beautiful native of the tropics; for, besides that the fibry part of it is in the East Indies manufactured into ropes and clothing, the cultivation of it is attended with yet another advantage: from its great height, and perhaps in some degree from the pointed form of its leaves, it is very liable to be struck with lightning, and it affords near a house the same protection as a metallic conductor. Many a headless trunk stands a memento of violent thunder-storms. But though thus liable to be blasted and occasionally rent by the electric fluid, it is never shivered or thrown down; and its slim elastic stem bids defiance to the utmost fury of the hurricane. Blossoms, ripe fruit, and green, are to be seen upon it at all seasons of the year, and it thrives in the most indifferent soils.

The calabash tree produces a large fruit, not eatable, but nevertheless valuable, as the skin of it is a hard and solid substance, like the shell of a nut, and when scooped out, answers the purpose of holding water, or cut across the middle, makes two cups or

dishes. Every negro has his calabash, and many have them carved with figures like those which are tattooed on the skins of the Africans. They are used to carry out their breakfast to them when at work in the field; and from their lightness and strength, are preferable for this purpose to almost any other kind of dish. Tin pans, however, are sometimes used. In the garden too, and commonly under the shade of the low outbranching calabash tree, are the graves of the family, covered with brick tombs.

Every family has a hogsty: poultry houses are not wanted; the chickens are carefully gathered at night, and hung up in baskets, to preserve them from the rats. The fowls lodge at all seasons in the trees about the houses. The premises belonging to each family are commonly surrounded with a fence; their provision grounds are generally at some distance.

The furniture in the negro houses of course varies very much according to the industry or indolence of the family. Some of the Africans have no idea of domestic comfort, and are so improvident that it is utterly impossible to make them comfortable. They will sell their very clothes to buy rum, nay, the pot given them to cook their victuals in; and I have known several instances of their pulling down and burning the very wattling of the houses provided for them, rather than take the trouble to collect fire-wood, although in abundance almost at their doors. With these nothing can be done; but their number is now small. The ordinary class of negroes have fixed beds, covered with deal boards and mats, on

which they sleep under a single blanket or sheet, which is all that the climate requires. The rest of their furniture consists of a trunk or chest to hold their clothes, a small cupboard for their cups and dishes, iron pots and tin pans for cooking, a plain deal table, bench, and a few chairs. The more wealthy, of which the number has increased much during the last ten years, sleep on beds filled with the dried leaves of the plantain tree, used also by the free people of colour: and the whole of their furniture, as I have before observed, is such as would astonish an English visitor, who, seeing it, would not easily believe himself in the house of a slave.

The longest and shortest day differ only about two hours in Jamaica, and the negroes are always home between six and seven o'clock in the evening, except those detained in their turn at the work during crop time. The evening is their time of enjoyment, and they sit up late, visiting and entertaining one another. About half-past eleven is the hour at which they generally go to bed, and they rise about half-past five, taking only six hours of sleep; but many of them take also a short sleep between twelve and two, their resting hours in the middle of the day. They designate the hours of the night by the crowing of the cocks—'before cock crow,' signifies before two o'clock; then follows 'second cock crow'—then 'cock crow fast'—and, lastly, 'day cut,' or dawn. The noise which some hundreds of cocks make about day-dawn in a negro village, amidst the usual stillness of a tropical morning,

cannot easily be imagined by those who have not heard it.

Regularly when the work of the day is over, the driver goes to the overseer, to give an account of what has been done, and receive instructions for the following day. These instructions he communicates to the people under him, that they may know where to meet at work the following morning. When they get up at day dawn, the first thing each does is to take his breakfast to the cook. It consists of plantains, edoes, or yams, or a few of each, with a little fresh or salted fish, or crabs, which are very abundant. These articles are sometimes boiled plain, sometimes made into a soup with some other vegetables, according to the various tastes and means of individuals. Women having young children generally cook their husbands' breakfast, and take it out to them when they go to work, or, if not going to the same field, give it to the cook to take out. Any of the people that feel unwell, instead of going to work, are in attendance at the overseer's door in the morning, to obtain admission to the hospital; and although there may be nothing the matter with some of the applicants (for, like sailors and others, they like '*to skulk*' occasionally), they are readily indulged with a dose of medicine and a day or two to rest. Few days, indeed, pass on any estate but some solicit and obtain this indulgence.

Pregnant women and people advanced in life are employed with the young people at light work. For three months before lying in, and two months after, a

woman does no work whatever. When the child is about a couple of months old she takes it out to the field. All the '*pickeninny mummas*' go to the same work, and the children are put down together in some shade near the field: one half of the mothers go to work, and the others sit with the children, nursing and doing needle work for themselves, and changing with the others every two hours or so. If it should rain they go home; or if a child should be fretful or apparently unwell, they either take it home or to the hospital. When a child is weaned, its mother carries it to the nursery in the morning, where it is attended to during the day, and she calls at night to take it home to her own house.

Breakfast, as has already been stated, is carried out to the field about nine o'clock. The driver or head man sits down by himself; the others form into little groups, according to their intimacies and attachments; and although each has his own dish (except that a man and his wife have but one for both), it is not uncommon for the whole group to mess together, and finish first one dish, and then another. After breakfast they have generally, and in wet weather (the only time perhaps that it is of any use) always, an allowance of rum given them. Some drink it off immediately — others club and make up a bottle, which they take in turn and carry home to use or sell as they think proper. In very wet weather they do not go out to work at all; or if, after they are gone to the field, the day turns out very bad, they are called in. At twelve o'clock

noon the shell is blown, and they disperse to enjoy two hours of rest, or to employ the time at their own concerns—mending their fences or hogsties, fishing, bathing, washing, carrying home fire-wood, cane-tops, or hog-meat, &c. A few roasted plantains, with a little fish, is all they seem to care about eating in the middle of the day; breakfast and supper being their chief meals. At half-past one o'clock the shell is blown again, and they re-assemble in the field at two.

The plantations have been very happily termed sugar gardens, and the general labour performed by the negroes may be compared to the cleaning and weeding of gardens in this country. The hardest work on them, as already noticed, is the turning up of a small portion of the field every year to be re-planted. This is most commonly done by jobbing negroes, who become so much accustomed to this description of labour, that they will sometimes grumble at being sent to what is considered lighter work.

As to the overworking of the negroes, how is the belief of it to be reconciled with the well known fact, that they sit up amusing themselves for nearly one half of the night, and take only six hours of sleep? Let the man in this country accustomed to hard labour, say, if he finds six hours of sleep sufficient to restore exhausted nature? or if, when the toils of the day are over, he finds any enjoyment equal to repose? The negroes perform willingly and cheerfully their regular and accustomed quan-

tity of work, but any attempt of an overseer to exact more is determinedly resisted and resented, and as I have already had occasion to notice, the sure consequence is, that every thing on the estate goes wrong.

Plantation Hospitals and Nurseries.

Besides the regular physician, who visits the hospital two or three times a week, or oftener if there is occasion, and examines all the patients individually, there is on every estate an 'hospital doctor' and a sick nurse. The former is an intelligent man (most commonly of colour), who, acting for years under the directions of the white doctor, acquires a sufficient knowledge of the common complaints of the negroes, to be capable of administering some simple medicines in cases of slight indisposition. In more serious cases, the physician, if not present, is sent for immediately, and must give prompt attendance, or his office is soon filled by some other person: the interest of the proprietor and character of the overseer, are too deeply concerned, even putting humanity out of the question, to excuse any degree of negligence on the part of the medical attendant. But it would be doing injustice to the gentlemen of the faculty merely to say that they are not negligent in their attendance on the negroes: some of them, as in other countries, are more zealous than others in the discharge of their duties, both to whites and blacks; but it is rare to see them wanting in a proper feeling for, and interest in their patients; and I have myself witnessed many instances where a medical gentleman has paid all the attention to a sick negro that he could have done to his master, sitting up with him for

nights, or, if he left him to take a few hours' sleep, giving injunctions to the attendants to call him up immediately, if any change should take place. It is almost unnecessary to add, that every article in the shape of medicine (including port and Madeira wine, &c.) likely to be useful, is always afforded. In short, no expense or trouble is spared.

One of the best disposed and most trustworthy women on the estate, is sick nurse, to attend the hospital; her duty is, to keep the hospital, and the sick in it, clean, and to cook such victuals for the patients as may be prescribed. I may also notice, that besides the attendance of the medical practitioner, the hospital doctor, and sick nurse, a negro dangerously ill is always allowed the presence of some of his own family.

In every hospital there are of course separate apartments for the men and the women; and generally an apartment where delinquents are confined in the stocks.

THE NURSERIES are neat buildings on a ground floor, with platforms for the children to sleep upon, and a spacious yard enclosed as a play-ground. They are under the superintendance of the best nurses, and however able the parents may be to provide for them, they are supported by the master with the food best adapted for their age, such as oatmeal, rice, and a pot of good soup for the whole once a day.

On the Abundance of Land Crabs and Fish in Jamaica, and Negro Methods of catching them.

CRABS abound in the eastern parts of Jamaica, at all seasons, but are considered best in the months, the names of which contain the letter R, April, &c. They are most plentiful in May, the season at which they deposit their eggs, or '*run*,' as the negroes express it, and when the earth is literally covered with them. At this season it is impossible to keep them out of the houses, or even out of the bed-rooms, where, at one time scratching with their large claws, and at another rattling across the floor, they make a noise that would be apt to startle and alarm a stranger. Occasionally they will ldoge themselves very snugly in a boot, and if a person puts in his foot upon them inadvertently, he has quick intimation of the intruder by a grasp of his nippers. For a few weeks in this season, they may be gathered in any quantities, and the negroes sometimes hurt themselves by making too free use of them. Even the hogs catch them, although not always with impunity, as a crab sometimes gets hold of one of them by the snout, from which he is not easily disengaged; and the terrified animal runs about squeaking in great distress. Land Crabs

At other seasons, and when more valuable, they are caught by torch light at night, and put into

covered baskets. Crowds of negroes from the neighbouring plantations pass my house every evening, with their torches and baskets, going to a crab wood on the other side, and return before midnight fully laden. Their baskets will contain about 40 crabs, and the regular price is a fivepenny piece, our smallest coin, equal to about 3½*d.* sterling, for five or six crabs. At this rate a negro will make 2*s.* 6*d.* currency in an evening; and the more improvident, who will not cultivate provision grounds, depend in some measure upon catching crabs, and selling them to the others. A hundred plantains, usually sold at five shillings, will purchase from sixty to seventy crabs; and two of these, eaten with plantains or yams, make an excellent meal. I have seen upwards of a hundred negroes pass my house in an evening, and return with their baskets on their heads, not only full of crabs, but with quantities of them fastened by the claws on the tops of the baskets. I make but a moderate computation when I suppose, they must have had at the very least, three thousand crabs. Almost every negro family has an old flour barrel pierced with holes, in which their crabs are kept. They are fed with plantain skins, &c.; and taken out and thrown into the pot as wanted.

There is a great variety of crabs in Jamaica, of which two only are eaten. The black is the finest, and has ever been esteemed one of the greatest delicacies in the West Indies, not excepting even the turtle. These live in the mountain forests, on stony ground; and feed on the fallen dry leaves of the

trees. The white crab, as it is called (although rather purple than white), used principally by the negroes, but by the white people also, is larger and more resembles in taste the lobster of this country. These are amphibious, and are found in the low lands, principally in the woods, where, as I have already said, they are caught at night with torches. But they are numerous also in the cultivated fields, and in some of the low lying estates, frequently do considerable injury to the planters in dry weather, when vegetation is slow, by nipping off the blade of the young canes and corn as it shoots through the ground. In situations of this kind, the negroes have a somewhat singular method of catching them; they know from the appearance of a crab-hole if there is a crab in it, and dig down with a hoe through the soft loam, till they come to water (about eighteen inches or two feet); and then close the hole firmly with a handful of dry grass. In this manner a negro will shut up two or three dozen of holes in a morning. About four hours after, he returns, and his prisoners being by this time '*drunkened*' (half drowned), they tumble out along with the plug of grass and are caught.

In the year 1811, there was a very extraordinary production of black crabs in the eastern part of Jamaica. In the month of June or July of that year, I forget which, the whole district of Manchioneal (where the great chain of the Blue Mountains, extending from west to east through the centre of the island, terminates on the east coast) was covered with countless millions of these creatures swarming from

the sea to the mountains. Of this singular phenomenon, I was myself an eye-witness, having had occasion to travel through that district at the time. On ascending Quahill, from the vale of Plantain-garden River, the road appeared of a reddish colour, as if strewed with brick-dust. I dismounted from my horse to examine the cause of so unusual an appearance, and was not a little astonished to find that it was owing to myriads of young black crabs, about the size of the nail of a man's finger, crossing the road and moving at a pretty quick pace direct for the mountains. I was concerned to think of the destruction I was causing in travelling through such a body of useful creatures, as I fancied that every time my horse put down a foot, it was the loss of at least ten lives. I rode along the coast a distance of about fifteen miles, and found it nearly the same the whole way, only that in some places they were more numerous, and in others less so. Returning the following day, I found the road still covered with them the same as the day before. 'How have they been produced in such numbers? or, where are they come from?' were questions every body asked, and no one could answer. It is well known the crabs deposit their eggs once a year, and in the month of May; but, except on this occasion, though living on the coast, I never saw a dozen of young crabs together, and here were millions of millions covering the earth for miles along a large extent of sea-coast. No unusual number of old crabs had been observed that season; and it is worthy of remark, that this prodi-

gious multitude of young ones were moving from a rock-bound shore formed by inaccessible cliffs, the abode of sea-birds, and against which the waves of the sea are constantly dashed by the trade wind blowing directly upon them. That the old crabs should be able to deposit their eggs in such a part of the coast (if that, as would appear, is the habit of the animal) is not a little extraordinary. No person in Jamaica, so far as I know or have heard, ever saw such a sight or any thing of the kind, but on that occasion; and I have understood that, since 1811, black crabs have been abundant farther into the interior of the island than they were ever known before.

Fish. I have already observed, that Jamaica, (the name of which, is said to have signified the island of springs,) is most bountifully supplied with water. Down every rugged and woody glen in the mountains, pours a crystal rivulet; reaching the plains, and collecting together, these form considerable streams, which passing through rich fields of canes, and turning sugar mills on their banks, gently wind their course to the ocean. Every river and streamlet abounds with fish, of which there is a great variety,—shrimps, crawfish or river lobster, mudfish and eels most abundant in still water,—mullets, plentiful every where, especially in the rocky mountain streams. These streams become very small in dry weather, when the fish collect in the numerous deep pools dug out by the falls of water among the rocks; and in the bright sunshine of the tropics it is a beautiful and amusing sight, to see them sporting

in these crystal havens of security. Calapivers (which may be termed the salmon of the tropics), snooks, &c. abound about the outlets of the rivers, and resort occasionally to the sea.

Negro methods of catching fish.

Shrimps are caught with baskets, and this kind of fishing forms not an unfrequent amusement for a party of negroes. It is quite a common thing to see 20 or 30 of them in the middle of the day wading together in a mill-lead, each with a basket catching shrimps. The other descriptions of fish are caught with traps or 'pots' as the negroes call them. These are made of the wild cane (of which baskets also are made and nearly in the same manner) plaited into a kind of wickerwork. There is free ingress to them, as into a wire mouse-trap; and to entice the fish to go in, the trap is baited with crabs' claws, plantain skins, slices of avocado pears, some codfish or herrings, and a few shining fragments of crockery ware. Thus prepared, it is lowered down with a stone in deep water, where fish are plenty, and has a line and buoy attached to mark the place and pull it up by. In shallow water it is fastened down with a stick stuck in the ground, which answers the purpose of a line and buoy. A young alligator is occasionally caught, having gone in after the fish, and a negro is far from pleased to find such an intruder, — he is soon decapitated. Another description of trap is used in shallow rivers to catch the fish as they go up or down. A row of pegs is placed across the stream from bank to bank, and wattled or filled up closely with cane leaves or any kind of shrub-

bery, in which row, or wear, the traps are set, some with the mouth or aperture to the one side and some to the other; the water oozes through, but the fish can neither pass up the river nor down, and in their endeavours to do so they are sure to run into the traps, the mouths of which appear to afford so many openings. Every little stream, and every mill course, is full of these traps; and at shell-blow numbers of the negroes are seen making traps or examining those they have in the water.

Fish are likewise very plentiful among the rocks along the sea-shore, and are caught there with traps set in the same manner as in the deep pools of the rivers. Almost every estate has a negro employed as a fisherman, and generally another, an old man, as a crab-catcher. Many of the larger properties on the sea-coast get a seine annually from England, which is drawn every morning to procure a dish of fish for the plantation. Eight or ten fishermen from different estates in the same neighbourhood (and generally a parcel of idlers collect on such occasions) join in drawing the seine, and each gets a dish of fish for the estate to which he belongs, which he carries home in time for dinner (2 o'clock); what may be over a dish to each estate, they keep for their own use; and they have the afternoon to prepare their traps, no other labour being required of them.

The use of the seine is always allowed to the negroes of the plantation when they wish it; and in fine weather they occasionally form parties and

go to sea to fish on negro days and holidays. The morning is the time for it; they convene at dawn (between 5 and 6 o'clock,) and are home to breakfast about 9. The beach in front of my house at Plantain-garden River being a favourite fishing ground, I have frequently walked out in the mornings to see parties of this kind, and have been pleased and amused with the mirth that prevailed among them; their loud cheers and the scramble that ensued when a successful draught was brought ashore; their extraordinary agility in the water, swimming and diving like ducks; and their bursts of admiration, vexation, or laughter, as the wary fish endeavouring to escape would leap to a great height over the seine, and occasionally fall into the canoes following behind it.

Exuberance of animal and vegetable life in the tropics.

Even in the swamps of Jamaica, fish are found. A large lagoon near where I resided, part of which is covered with reeds, abounds with a small kind of fish, from 3 to 4 inches long, called by the negroes bugabees or bungabees. In the dry season, as the space of water becomes contracted, these are caught with baskets in immense quantities. In short, earth, air, and water, here swarm with animal life, — with many creatures that are useful, and many given, as it would seem, rather as a curse than a blessing to man. Clouds of troublesome musquitoes, and the still more numerous and more troublesome sandflies, occasionally fill the air; while the water swarms with fish, and the earth with crabs, rats, lizards,

snakes, and other smaller vermin, centipedes, scorpions, cockroaches, and especially ants, which are every where in the fields and in the houses. One species of these, which form their nests in trees, are used for feeding young poultry. The nest, or a part of it about the size of a beehive, is broken off and carried home on the end of a stick or pole. Being broken and the fragments struck against one another, the young ants shower down upon the ground or into a pool of water, and are greedily devoured by young chickens and ducklings.

As the sun goes down, and the trade wind dies away, the newly arrived stranger travelling along the road or in the fields, is surprised and startled by the strange noise that assails his ears: it seems like magic; for he cannot conjecture what it is, or where it comes from. It is a concert raised by thousands and tens of thousands of lizards, crickets, and grasshoppers, which unseen surround him. Shortly after he is yet more surprised to see sparks of fire darting from one place to another, till, at last, as darkness closes

> ——— Around,
> Myriads of insect meteors, living lamps,
> People the glittering air.

It is the fire-flies gambolling over the cane fields.

Nor do the productions of the vegetable world appear less interesting and extraordinary. Every shrub and every tree he sees, is new to an European. It is an eternal summer; from January to December, travel where he will, he sees the earth teeming forth

her bounties; he sees the trees covered at once with blossom and fruit; he sees the *Bombax* or great cotton tree (compared with which the loftiest oak in England sinks into a dwarf,) richly mantled over, trunk and branches, with the hogmeat-vine, presenting the most singular and beautiful appearance; he sees the husbandman sowing and reaping every month in the year; he sees a field of guinea-grass now bare, and a week after, if it has been refreshed with a shower, waving in the wind; he sees the whole earth clothed with the richest vegetation, with scarcely a barren speck, for even the very sands and rocks are covered with wild vines, of the most beautiful verdure.

Storm of 1815.

I have mentioned that every stream and rivulet in Jamaica abounds with fish; but Yallahs river, since 1815, is perhaps an exception: the dreadful storm on the 18th and 19th of October in that year having swept away or destroyed every description of fish in it. This river, which in wet weather is the dread of travellers, has its source among the highest of the Blue Mountains, whence, collecting its waters from a number of rugged glens in a mountainous district, where the scenery is beyond description awful and sublime, it rushes down its short course to the sea with such impetuosity as to carry stones of great size along with it. The unexampled rain that accompanied the storm or hurricane of 1815, the effects of which will be seen for ages, loosened the soil on the hill sides; and repeated shocks of earthquake taking place at the same time, the ground in

several steep places gave way and slid down into the ravines. The torrent of water was thus for a time dammed back; but forcing its way at last over these obstacles it speedily swept away the earth, stones, and trees that obstructed its course. The works of many of the sugar and coffee plantations were destroyed, some swept away, and others buried deep under stones and gravel. The number of lives lost was considerable, and the case of a Mr. Smith and his family was particularly distressing. His house stood on a small plain at some distance from the river, which, however, overflowing its banks and cutting a new channel on the other side between him and the mountains, left him no means of escape. His house was carried away, and when last seen he was clinging to a tree with some of his family; they were carried away by the torrent, and their bodies so mangled, that only some of their legs and arms were ever found. A large iron bridge was swept away at the same time, not a particle of which has ever been seen.

Happening to be in Kingston at the time of this storm, and Yallahs river continuing for several weeks impassable (several years elapsed before it ran clear), I embarked in a coasting vessel to return to Port Morant by sea. Passing off the mouth of Yallahs river we were obliged to take a considerable offing to keep clear of the enormous quantity of floating trees which literally covered the water, to a considerable distance, while the interior of the country bore scarcely less striking traces of the storm. The white

chasms in the mountains marked the broken ground that had been carried away; and the usual green appearance of the forests being changed into a brown colour, they looked exactly as if they had been scorched with fire. Eight or nine sail of West Indian ships, and all the smaller craft of every description in Port Maria, Annotta Bay, Port Antonio, and Manchioneal, were driven on shore and lost. In the county of Surrey the crop on the ground both of canes and provisions was nearly destroyed; but the leeward part of the island sustained little injury. It is worthy of remark, to how small a space these visitations are frequently confined. In the present instance the centre of the storm passed from north to south across the island from Annotta Bay down the course of Yallahs river on the other side. At Spanish-town, about 40 miles to the west, it was scarcely felt; and a vessel off the Morant Keys at the time, about 50 miles to the east, experienced only a fresh gale.

In the month of May in the present year, 1825, there was a shower of hail, or rather of ice, in the eastern part of Jamaica. The cloud came from the north, and was attended with a most violent gust of wind, which continued about half-an-hour. The pieces of ice were not round, like hail, but of an angular shape about the size of nutmegs. A parcel of them gathered and put into a glass took half-an-hour to melt in a temperature of 75°. The negroes who had never before seen water in a congealed state, were in the utmost consternation and terror at this extraordinary phenomenon.

Of the Decrease in the Slave Population of the Colonies.

THE decrease of the slaves in our colonies having been referred to by Mr. Stephen and other writers, as affording demonstrative proof of their being ill-treated by their masters, I mean, in this article, to offer a few remarks on the subject: and I must begin with one which may seem rather trite, and yet appears to have escaped these writers; namely, that wherever there is an influx of foreign inhabitants to any town or country, it must occasion the deaths to exceed the births in the bills of mortality. Such, it is almost needless to say, is the case in every city in Europe; such was the case in the States of America, and such has been, and will be the case, in the West Indies, till the bulk of imported Africans is extinct; for the effect here does not cease immediately with the cause. *Adults* for the most part were imported, children but rarely (to say nothing of there being fewer women than men), and the necessary consequence was, that a large proportion of the slave population was always far advanced in years. Hence, when importation ceased, it was clear that they must decrease till the over-proportion of aged persons had died off, and time had produced a population consisting, as in other places, of a due proportion of all ages.

To place this matter in a clearer view, let us look at the population of Great Britain, and compare it with that in one of our colonies. The Government returns of 1821 give the ages of 12,487,377 persons, of which we find only 4,402,592, not quite A THIRD, are above 30 years of age; while, by a return of the slave population of Demerara and Essequibo, so late as the 31st of May, 1823, it appears, that out of 74,418 persons (one half of them Africans), no less than 38,057, *considerably upwards of* ONE HALF of the whole slave population, were then above the age of thirty. Here, then, is a most important fact, established by documents that will not be questioned; for it surely will not be said that the negroes are represented as *older* than they actually are; the contrary is well known to be the case. When the Africans were registered, there being of course no possibility of ascertaining the time of their birth, and as the younger the more valuable, in affixing their age the masters certainly somewhat under-rated it: the Africans, therefore, must even exceed in years what is stated, and I am satisfied that nearly one half of the negro population of Demerara can at the present moment be little under 40 years of age. That a population composed of so large a proportion of persons past the prime of life can support itself, is utterly impossible: for it is clear, that, exclusive of other casualties, in little more than twenty years nearly one half of them must in the course of nature be cut off by old age, while the number born can be but limited, because breeding begins at an early age among the negroes, and a large proportion of the

females are already past the age of bearing children.*

In the island of Jamaica, the imported slaves or Africans constitute somewhat above a fourth part of the whole; and supposing their ages on arrival to have been on an average only twenty, the last imported in 1807, and youngest of the Africans, will now be thirty-eight; and the average age of the whole that were imported during the last twenty years of the African trade, may certainly be stated as above fifty. A statement of the ages of the negro population (which the Assembly ought to publish) will shew that it consists of an over proportion under twenty and above forty years of age; the consequence of which, for some time, must be an excess of deaths over births. To illustrate this, I quote from a Table in the Jamaica Journal, of the 15th of May, 1824, the following cases:—

	Under 20.	Between 20 and 40.	Above 40.	Total.
Mr. M'Queen's gang, Georgia, consists of	105	48	29	182, nearly all Creoles
Middle Land Estate (Jamaica) gang, consists of	130	97	149	376, of these 110 are Africans.

* It may be observed, by the way, that the circumstance just noticed, of so many of the slaves in Demerara being *adults*, and so few under age, accounts for the average quantity of sugar raised by each being so much greater there than in the islands, without, on the one hand, allowing so much as some do to the superior fertility of the soil, or, on the other, supposing the people to have been over-worked; by which last charitable supposition, some account both for the greater produce and the greater decrease in the population. With a greater proportion of infants and young people, the produce of Demerara would have averaged less to each slave: but then the population, instead of falling off, would have been increasing in strength.

In the first of these cases, the Africans having mostly died off, we find a very large proportion of young people. In the latter, where there remain 110 Africans, we find a large proportion of aged persons; and such is the case on the generality of estates in Jamaica: whence it is evident, that for the ensuing fifteen years there will, according to the common course of nature, be more deaths than births; although as great a proportion of the people should reach their 'three-score and ten years' as in any other country. When the Africans are gone, Middle Land Estate will be in the same situation as Mr. M'Queen's, of Georgia, now is; it will have a preponderance of young people at the age of reproduction, when of course a rapid increase of numbers may be expected, as the births will naturally be numerous and the deaths from old age few.

On estates in Jamaica peopled with Creoles, or having few Africans, there is even now a large annual increase of numbers; and on the same principle, in the old settled island of Barbadoes, into which few Africans have been imported since 1786, and where consequently they must now be nearly all extinct, there is an excess of births over deaths to such an extent, that, on a population amounting, in 1812, to 69,000, there was found, in 1820, an increase of nine thousand. A similar increase has taken place in Virginia, into which importation ceased in 1775; and where there probably is not now a single African alive.

More need not be said to shew how far the ill-treat-

ment of the slaves is proved by the decrease of their numbers since the abolition. But Mr. Cropper's calculations on this subject are so ingenious, tell so well against the colonists, and are so widely circulated by the writers against them (among others by the Edinburgh Review), that it seems necessary to take some notice of them.

This gentleman, (who, it is said, is a Liverpool merchant, at the head of a house which receives consignments of American cotton, and East India sugar,) founds his calculations on an assumption, that the imported slaves ought to have encreased and multiplied from the day of their landing, at a rate three times greater than that at which the people of England increase. Upon this assumption, being an expert arithmetician, he finds that had the slaves so increased and multiplied, there would have been living in Jamaica in the year 1820, 400,000 slaves more than there were; and hence that the colonists are chargeable 'with a destruction or waste of human life, or a 'counteraction of *its natural tendency to increase* to the 'extent of 400,000 persons in the short space of thirty 'years;' on which he observes that 'a system which 'destroys the lives or *prevents the existence* of 400,000 'human beings in one island, in thirty years, is des- 'perately wicked, whether it yields profit or not.'

The rate at which Mr. C. conceives the slave population in Jamaica ought to have increased, is founded on an American statement, professing to shew that the negroes in the United States had greatly more than doubled their numbers in the thirty

years preceding 1820. Without questioning how far an accurate account was kept of the slaves imported into America during those thirty years, notorious as it is, that many thousands were carried into the southern states after the abolition by Congress; or how far we can depend on the accuracy of a census taken over sixteen thinly peopled states, where there are no registers of slaves, and some of which are larger than the whole kingdom of Great Britain; let us apply Mr. Cropper's principle at home. The population of the United Kingdom in 1720, amounted to 6,955,000 which increasing at the rate of 28½ per cent. every ten years (being the rate assumed by Mr. Cropper as that at which the slaves in Jamaica ought to have increased), there should have been in 1820, a population exceeding eighty-five millions. It proved to be little more than fourteen millions; and to use the gentleman's own words, a system of government which destroys the lives, or *prevents the existence* of upwards of 71 millions of human beings in one island, in the course of one century, must be desperately wicked.

In Mr. Cropper's estimate of the decrease of the slaves in Jamaica during the last thirty years, and that given in the Edinburgh Review (No. 82.) there is no notice of the increase of the free coloured population from 10,000 to 35,000, or in other words of at least 20,000 slaves having been emancipated in that island, which occasions a decrease to that extent in the number of the slaves. Such an item, indeed, was unworthy of notice in an estimate of the

hundreds of thousands of human beings, whose existence the colonists have prevented!

While the African trade in slaves was carried on, it cannot be doubted that there was a waste of life, as well after their arrival in the colonies, as while on board the ships of the now philanthropic merchants of Liverpool, who carried on the trade, and petitioned most earnestly against its abolition. In the removal of a barbarous people, subject to diseases incident to a change of climate and new mode of life, and sometimes doubtless with their wants and comforts too much neglected, not only on board ship, but on their arrival in the colonies, such must have been the case. Besides, is it to be supposed that Africa cast forth the most healthy or the most vigorous of her barbarous offspring? Is it not more probable that, generally speaking, it was such as were found of least use at home? Such has ever been my impression, from seeing among them so many poor creatures unable to provide for themselves and actually a burthen to those who became their masters; so many also with hereditary or constitutional diseases, which too often still visit the iniquities of the father upon the children. By no kind of management, no care or kindness, was it possible that they could have supported their numbers.

These are the principal causes which have occasioned the decrease of the slaves in Jamaica; these causes have now in a great measure ceased to exist; and when the over proportion of aged persons have died off, it cannot be doubted that a body of la-

bourers provided with houses and homes, and unrestrained by the difficulties which oppose matrimonial connexions among the labourers of England, will rapidly increase.

Among the minor causes which have tended to reduce the number of the unfortunate Africans, was their almost universal passion for rum; which, being so plentiful, and so easily obtained, could not be withheld from them. This has been the bane of thousands, and will yet hasten many more to premature graves. Fortunately the Creoles, though they also are addicted to this destructive vice, are less so than their fathers. Perhaps a greater number die under ten years of age in the colonies, than in Europe; but this is not to be attributed to slavery, for it is equally the fate of the white and free coloured children; and from that age, if I am not mistaken, the registry returns will show that as large a proportion of the people attain to old age as is common in Europe. They are not subject to the violent fevers, which prove so fatal to Europeans in those climates, but on the other hand, they suffer more from dysentery, pleurisy, and other inflammatory complaints, which during the prevalence of the northerly winds in December and January, are often destructively epidemic.

In the end of the year 1820 or beginning of 1821, the measles were brought into Kingston, and ravaged the whole island, carrying death into almost every dwelling. The lives lost by this visitation were estimated at 10,000; and I am satisfied that the estimate was rather under the truth: many of the plantations

lost to the extent of 40 people, and the streets of Kingston for some months were crowded with funerals of people of all descriptions.

About twenty years ago, a very great number of infants were lost by locked jaw; but by a better system of management, deaths from this cause are become rare. The change of management consisted in keeping the lying-in room more open, and having no fire in it; dipping the infants in water, and washing them once or twice a day; covering them more closely, and paying more attention to keep them dry. Among children under ten years of age, the most fatal complaint now is worm fever, which the climate, the fruits, and the juice of the cane (and it would be in vain to attempt to keep these from them), all, perhaps, tend to produce. Vermifuges are given them every month, and it is rather a singular idea among the negroes that their efficacy is greatest at the full of the moon. The most common article used and the safest is cowhage, a native plant; an infusion of the bark of the cabbage tree is also used, but is more dangerous, as an over-dose of it is nearly as fatal as an over-dose of laudanum. Dirt-eating or *mal de stomach*, so prevalent and fatal some years ago among the Africans, and also among the creoles, especially about the age of puberty, is now scarcely heard of; and the yaws, a horrible African disease, has nearly disappeared.

These diseases are noticed merely to shew some of the casualties to which negroes are subject: for really many people in this country seem to think the

slaves but for ill treatment would be immortal, and that the death of every 'poor negro' is a proof of oppression and cruelty on the part of his master. When time has removed the present disproportionate number of imported adults, there will be an excess of births in the other islands, as there now is in Barbadoes and the Bahamas, and the colonists will be happily relieved of a charge of oppression and cruelty, founded on the fact that they cannot keep alive the old Africans, and make them as prolific as young people.

Strictures on the Edinburgh Review; or, Effects of Negro Emancipation in St. Domingo.

THIRTY-FIVE years have now elapsed since the slaves in St. Domingo (instigated by the spirit for liberty and equality then raging in France, and fomented in its colonies by the philanthropic society of Paris called *Les Amis des Noirs*) broke out into insurrection, and after a protracted conflict, memorable for acts of ferocious cruelty unparalleled in the history of the species, effected their freedom by the destruction of their masters.

In the great question as to the propriety of abolishing negro slavery in our colonies, which for some years has received so large a share of public attention, this case of general emancipation in the largest of the West Indian islands, has been viewed with deep interest, as affording a practical solution of the problem—whether freedom, so valuable to Britons, is equally so to African slaves; and while one party has represented the experiment as having been signally crowned with success; another has as positively asserted, that the consequences could not have been more melancholy—merciless slaughter, inse-

curity of property, annihilation of industry, and military despotism.*

In a late number of the Edinburgh Review, we

* An experiment of emancipation has been tried by our government in Berbice, and some idea may be formed of the result from what passed in a committee of supply (March 21st), last session of parliament.

Mr. HUME said there was another item to which he wished to call the attention of the House, — that of a sum of £1287 for James Walker, Esq. Superintendent of Slaves in the Island of Berbice. This vote was of great importance. An opinion prevailed among some persons, that the free labour of blacks might be made as productive as that of the same persons in a state of slavery. In the colony of Berbice the experiment was made, at the request of Mr. Wilberforce, upon between three and four hundred slaves, most of them artizans. These slaves were placed out in the manner that was thought most conducive to their interest, and most likely to be productive; but their labour was never found adequate to their support. The consequence was, that for four successive years the public was called upon to pay between £1600 and £2000 for their support. It was incredible what trouble the treasury was put to on so trifling a subject. In 1820, there were no less than thirty-two letters passed, in reference to it, between the superintendent at Berbice and the Treasury.—The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, this establishment commenced under peculiar circumstances. When Berbice came into the possession of this country, the property in these slaves came with it: and it was thought a favourable opportunity of trying whether an improved system might not be introduced in the colonies by the manumission of slaves. It was managed for some years by Commissioners, with zeal and prudence; but disorders having arisen, it eventually fell into the hands of Government. It was certainly true, that the labour of these slaves did not pay their own expences; but *there* were the slaves, and *here* was the establishment, and the difficulty was to get out of it. *The thing was altogether in an unsatisfactory state.*

The case of the Maroons in Jamaica may also be referred to here, to show how little the possession of mere freedom can effect the civilization of a savage people. They have been free since the English took possession of the island, and what is now their condition? Have they become civilized? Have they become industrious? Have they in any one sense become useful members of the commonwealth? Every one knows they have not. The men continue to roam half naked in the woods, hunting the wild boar; and, as is the custom of all savages, make the women do every species of drudgery. Even the most common comforts of civilized life, good houses and good clothes, are utterly disregarded by them; while the Negroes on the plantations, trained to habits of subordination and industry, acquiring wealth, and a taste for domestic comforts, and now at least to some degree instructed in the truths of religion, have made no inconsiderable progress.

find an article, '*On the state of Hayti,*' in which 'the New Empire' as they call it, is said to be flourishing beyond any example in the world, and 'to afford an 'instance of an uncivilized people passing from sla-'very to freedom, and becoming *in a few years civi-'lized and even refined.*' This certainly is a wonderful circumstance, and is justly said to be 'novel in the history of the species,' although it is scarcely more novel than another told us by the same party, that civilized and refined Europeans, crossing the Atlantic, to islands in the neighbourhood of Hayti, speedily undergo a transformation no less miraculous, into cruel and merciless savages!

But are these novelties in the history of the species, supported by such proof as their *novelty* demands? We suspect not. The Reviewers admit, that 'little 'intercourse having been held with the New Empire, '*we are very imperfectly informed of its internal situa-'tion; and countries far more remote are familiar to us in comparison;*' and hence there is room to doubt the truth of so extraordinary an occurrence as this sudden transition from ignorance and barbarism to civilization and refinement. But though few may choose to visit the interior of Hayti, or perhaps are allowed to do so, it is not true that we have had little intercourse with the island; for notwithstanding Mr. Stephen says that we have foolishly renounced its very valuable commerce in complaisance to Jamaica, the truth is, that nearly one half of its produce is brought to this country in British ships direct; and our ships of war on the Jamaica station also frequently visit its ports.

Our naval officers and ship captains, however, who have been in the island, tell a different tale, and one which does not suit the Reviewers' purpose so well. If *they* are entitled to any credit, we must form a very different opinion as to the population, industry, and moral habits of the Haytians: and certainly the documents from which the Reviewers collect their 'authentic information' must be viewed by the impartial with some little distrust: viz.—1. Gasconading proclamations by President Boyer, and the 'official returns' he published at a time when invasion by the French was apprehended; 2dly, a letter from his Secretary-General, Inginac; and 3dly, a report of a committee of the African Institution of America, or American Convention, as it is called, for the abolition of slavery and improvement of the African race.

Let the reader consider whether it would be most extraordinary that the President of Hayti should exaggerate the power and prosperity of the 'New Empire' at such a moment, or that, under the 'vicis-'situdes, disasters, and revolutions of twenty-five 'years' (to borrow the words of Christophe), there should have been such an advance in population, wealth, industry, and the civilization and refinement of a rude and savage people. By these official reports and proclamations, we are required to believe, that, notwithstanding the enormous slaughter of the revolution, so unprecedented in its cruelties,—notwithstanding the many thousands of white and coloured French people who fled to Jamaica, Cuba,

and the United States,—notwithstanding the Spaniards that more recently fled to Cuba and Porto Rico,—and notwithstanding the great number of natives since killed in the war so long and so bloodily maintained between the rival negro and mulatto chiefs, Petion and Christophe, the population has had an increase of 270,000 since the revolution! It is stated by the Review to have been, previous to that event, 655,000, and is now estimated at 935,335, and will receive an additional increase, says the Reviewer, by the resolution adopted by President Boyer to receive and allot land to 6,000 free blacks and men of colour from the United States.*

* But it has since appeared, by the following 'official document,' that whatever hardships those helpless creatures had to struggle with, in a country where they are deprived of all civil rights, they were glad to return to it, after getting a sight of the situation of their 'civilized and refined' brethren of colour in the 'New Empire.'

'NOTICE.

'From the Office of the Secretary-General of Hayti.

'The Government of the Republic, in offering an asylum to the African descendants who exist in the United States, deprived of all civil rights, did it not so much for its own advantage, as of that of this oppressed people. Its munificence, indeed, has extended not only to the encouragement of emigration to Hayti, but the entire expense of it has also been defrayed.

'It was not, therefore, to have been expected that a base speculation would have been made of the transportation of emigrants to Hayti from the United States, and that among Captains of vessels, as well as among the emigrants themselves, there would have been found persons so demoralized as to violate their good faith. Yet, it cannot be denied, that Captains, not satisfied with having persuaded emigrants who had settled in the Republic, to return to the United States, have even shared with them the profits of the speculation.

'How many persons have been known to have demanded the means of returning before they had scarcely debarked, and before the expiration of the four months, for which rations had been granted by the State? Were it necessary to offer new proof of the concert of a large number of emigrants with Captains of vessels, we would state, that several families which arrived in the Olive Branch, on the 4th

This increase, under such circumstances, is surely not a little extraordinary, and to be credited requires the most unexceptionable evidence; but it is thus confirmed:—'The armed force of the country,' say the Reviewers, speaking on the same authority, 'is 'quite in proportion to its population; the regular 'troops amounting to 45,520, and the national guards 'to 113,328, making a body of 158,848 men trained 'to arms.' What! an armed force of 158,848 men in an island, where, taking the population to be even as stated, there cannot (including boys and old men, hale and sick) be more than 467,664 males. *This surely is quite in proportion!* Let not Mr. Hume object to our Army Estimates after this, for to be in proportion to our population, even if we had no colonies to defend, our armed force for Great Britain and Ire-

---

instant, demanded their permission to return *three days after they had landed.* These emigrants are so completely destitute, as to require that the Republic should pay, not only the expense of their passage, but also that of their removal from the interior to the ports of the United States where they embark. How, then, could this speculation take place, were not these emigrants interested in the scheme?

'Wishing, therefore, to suppress this fraudulent practice, which draws considerably from the public treasury, without accomplishing the object proposed, all Captains of United States' vessels, and others who shall convey emigrants to Hayti, are hereby notified, that the Government of the Republic will not defray any expense for the passages of the said emigrants, after the 15th of June, 1825.

'The emigration societies that have been formed in the United States are also notified, that, after the above date, no allowance will be made to them by the Government, for any aid rendered to emigrants; and that, hereafter, they will only be entitled to four months' provisions, and a lot of ground for cultivation, the property of which they may require, *after having paid its value.*

'By Authority: 'B. INGINAC,

'Port-au-Prince, April, 1825. 'Secretary-General.'

land alone, ought to be little short of five millions of men trained to arms.

With regard to the credit due to such authority, opinions may differ; but he who has *seen* the island of St. Domingo clothed in its native woods, with scarcely a vestige of cultivation, will attach little belief to the existence of such a population; or to the possibility of taking a census of a barbarous people thinly scattered amidst its extensive forests. The Reviewers, however, who can believe nothing but what is bad of their own countrymen in the West Indies, and think even the Assemblies unworthy of credit when they speak of the improved condition of the slave population, have no such distrust of 'the civilized and refined people of the New Empire;' and Boyer's bravadoes and high-sounding statements serve admirably with Mr. Cropper's ingenious calculation of the decrease of the slaves in Jamaica, to make an invidious comparison between it and Hayti.

But to proceed to a consideration of the effects of negro emancipation on the *wealth and industry* of St. Domingo, as shewn by these very acceptable official reports:—'We have now before us,' say the Reviewers, 'the official returns of 1822, specifying the trade 'of the island with all parts of the world. By this 'it appears, that 652,541 pounds of sugar, equal to 'about 544 hogsheads of 12 cwt., 891,950 of cotton, 'and 35,117,834 of coffee, or 350,000 cwt. are ex-'ported to foreign parts. This is beside the cocoa 'and woods; and it is also over and above all the 'sugar, coffee, and cotton, required for home con-

'sumption.* The whole exports of the island for 'that year were of the value of above nine millions 'of dollars, or above two millions of pounds sterling. 'The value of the imports was nearly three millions; 'and the tonnage employed in the export and import 'trade together was about 200,000, in 1835 vessels. 'But in case there should be any one who disregards 'all produce and all trade that brings nothing into 'the Exchequer, we can relieve him at once; for the 'duties upon exports and imports, during the same 'year, exceeded £678,000 sterling,—a very hand-'some branch of revenue, which even the oldest and 'most legitimate government in Europe would re-'gard with the most respectful attention.'

This sounds well:—Thousands of pounds of sugar, millions of pounds of coffee, hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping, millions of dollars, &c. But let us get rid of this parade of figures by taking *tons* in place of pounds; and, that the extent of the Haytian wealth, and the industry of the people, may be more correctly estimated, let us compare their exports, *as stated by the Review*, with those of their predecessors and their present neighbours.

* Of course all the West India islands consume a part of their sugar and coffee; but the only manufactory of cotton there is into *lamp wicks*.

TABLE,

Shewing the Exports of Jamaica, in 1820,* *by Returns to the House of Assembly; the Exports of St. Domingo, under the French, in* 1791, *as returned to the Legislative Body; and of the same island (including the part which belonged to Spain), in* 1822, *as stated from official documents by the Edinburgh Review; also the amount of Tonnage, Population, and average quantity of Produce raised by each person.*

	Jamaica. 1820.	Saint Domingo. 1791.	Saint Domingo. 1822.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Muscovado sugar	98,273	102,934	291
Rum, reckoned at 10 cwt. the punchn.	23,196	151	..
Molasses	126	14,751	..
Coffee	9,877	30,424	15,677
Ginger and Pimento	13	..	..
Cotton	..	2,806	397
Indigo	..	415	..
TOTAL OF PRODUCE EXPORTED	131,185	151,481	16,365
Population	380,000	490,000	935,335
Average quantity of produce raised by each person in lbs.	775	692	39
AMOUNT OF SHIPPING.			
European trade	101,365	189,679	..
American trade	56,411	55,745	..
Spanish trade	15,557	15,417	..
Vessels trading under the Free Port Act	13,121	..	..
Coasting trade	3,109	..	..
Total of Tonnage, that of Hayti taken from the official report quoted in the Edinburgh Review	189,563	260,841	200,000
N. B. French ships carry less cargo in proportion to tonnage measurement than English.			
Of woods I find no statement in the official report. The quantity of logwood, fustic, Nicaragua wood, and lignum vitæ, from Jamaica and St. Domingo, landed in the West India Docks, in 1823, was	6,122	..	46
Ditto of measured woods	151	..	1,062

* This crop is taken as I happen to have the official returns of it. The crop of 1822, I believe, was larger.

By the above table we find—

1st, That in Jamaica 380,000 persons export by their industry 131,185 tons of produce, averaging to each 775lbs. and giving employment to 189,563 tons of shipping, mostly British.

2d, That in the *French* part of St. Domingo, previous to the Revolution, 490,000 persons exported 151,481 tons of produce, averaging to each 692lbs. and giving employment to 260,841 tons of shipping.

And 3dly, That the whole of this fine island, containing, as it is said, 935,335 persons, now exports only 16,365 tons of produce, averaging to each person 39lbs.!

But nothing is so astonishing in the 'New Empire' as the amount of tonnage required to carry its produce. Jamaica, with a large Spanish trade, and importing millions of shingles, staves, wood hoops, and boards, from North America, to cover the manufacturing and other buildings throughout the country, and to make casks to contain 131,485 tons of sugar, rum, coffee, &c. for exportation, employs only 189,563 tons of shipping; and we are modestly told that Hayti, with no Spanish trade, no manufacturing buildings to cover, no casks to make, and consequently wanting no materials for these purposes, gives employment to one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five vessels, or about 200,000 tons of shipping, to carry from sixteen to seventeen thousand tons of produce!! According to this statement, the ships

employed in the Haytian trade, in 1822, averaged 108 tons, and had to each not quite 9 tons of produce for a cargo! It is almost unnecessary to observe, that the exports from a West India island far exceed the imports, and that, consequently, these one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five ships had even worse cargoes into St. Domingo than out of it.

Let us now attend to the value of the exports and imports of St. Domingo, and the amount of revenue raised by the government, as stated in the 'official returns,' founded on by the Review. These are points of the greatest importance in judging of the wealth and prosperity of the island, and upon which we rejoice to have at last obtained official information. It is well known that the only source of wealth in a West Indian island is the exportation of its agricultural produce to foreign countries, in exchange for which it receives money, or such commodities as the people stand in want of. The imports of St. Domingo consist principally of salted beef, pork, fish, lard, flour and lumber, from the United States of North America, and of crockery and iron ware, clothing, coffee-bagging, &c. from England; and are valued at three millions of dollars. The exports in 1822 are estimated at 'above nine millions of dollars, 'or above two millions of pounds sterling'—on what principle we are not told; but on this point there can surely be little difficulty in coming at the truth—we cannot err much in calculating the value of the

different articles exported at the current prices of the London market, as follows:—

Coffee per the official return 35,117,834 lbs.; worth in London, after paying freight, &c. about 50*s.* the cwt.....	£783,880
Sugar, per ditto, 652,541 lbs. about 30*s.* the cwt.....	8,739
Cotton, per ditto, 891,950 lbs. about 9*d.* per lb.....	33,448
Cocoa woods, &c. quantity not stated, say (although they cannot amount to so much).....	73,933
Total value of Exports, at the utmost.....	£900,000

The same official report states the imports at 'three millions of dollars,' which at 4s. 6d. each, is equal to £675,000, and the duties levied by government on exports and imports at £678,000, making together £1,353,000, or £430,000, more than the whole value of the produce exported. But the difference may perhaps *in part* be accounted for by supposing that the price of coffee was a few shillings higher in 1822 than at present, and that some credit was given by foreign merchants for goods imported. This, however, is not material: there are points of more importance which claim our attention.

That the statement has been brought forward to give the most favourable view of the state of Hayti, and of the effects of negro emancipation, we suppose will not be denied; and what does it prove, but that in St. Domingo, once proudly and justly termed the queen of the Antilles, cultivation has nearly ceased, the whole exportable commodities having dwindled down from 151,000 tons, worth eight millions ster-

ling, in 1791, to little more than 17,000 tons, worth about £900,000, in 1822; and that even of this petty sum the greater part is seized upon by a despotic government. Often and often has this been told before by eye-witnesses, and as often denied by the advocates of emancipation; but these 'official returns' clearly establish that at least *one half* of the value of the whole exportable produce of the island goes to the exchequer! If this is not slavery, what is it?

Perhaps it will be said that the diminished amount of exports from St. Domingo at least proves that there is little labour performed by the negroes there. It certainly does: but the diminished amount of *imports* is equally conclusive proof that if they are not labouring, so neither are they receiving the reward of labour. Their poverty will best appear by comparing the amount of their imports with those of Jamaica. Into this comparatively little island, in extent not equal to one-fourth of St. Domingo, the annual imports from England, Ireland, the United States of America, Newfoundland, and the British provinces in North America, amount by Colquhoun's tables to £4,577,933 sterling. What proportion of the articles is for the personal use of the free classes, the white and coloured people, it is difficult to ascertain; but regarding the slaves we know that (exclusive of what they may purchase with the means derived from the sale of their surplus provisions in an island abounding with wealth and industry) they receive, one with another, from their masters, foreign

commodities, viz. dry and pickled fish, clothing, cooking utensils, flour, rice, medicines, &c. to the amount of at least £3 each, or £960,000, among 320,000 persons; and we should not perhaps be very wide of the truth, in supposing that one-half of the imports, or about two millions sterling, is for the use of the inhabitants; the other half for agricultural or manufacturing purposes—stills, boilers, machinery, staves, shingles, boards, iron and wood hoops, coals, nails, oil, &c. Now what says Secretary General Inginac, or the official reports of St Domingo? That the population is 935,335, and that the imports are '*nearly* three millions of dollars,' or £675,000. Allowing this to be the case, and supposing that these imports or foreign commodities were equally divided among all classes, the poor getting as much as the rich, what would be the state of these emancipated negroes after thirty years of freedom? Why, that of the various articles imported, salted beef, pork, fish, lard, flour, boards and shingles from the United States—and clothing, crockery and iron ware, coffee bagging, &c. from England, the share to each citizen would be the value of just *fourteen shillings and five-pence!* No statement so conclusive as to the indolence, the poverty, and wretchedness of the blacks in St. Domingo, was ever before given to the world. They may exist—plantains and yams they may have with little trouble, and some of the wealthier inhabitants of the towns may live comfortably; but if Secretary General Inginac, or the 'of-

ficial returns' are to be believed, it is utterly impossible that one-half of this 'civilized and refined' people can have rags to cover their nakedness.*

The letter of the Secretary General is further of importance, as throwing some light on the internal economy of the island. Speaking of the state of agriculture, Inginac says, 'since 1814 the 'number of proprietors has increased by the ap- 'propriation of uncultivated land, by donations of 'the government, and by the division of the land of 'the old colonists, to the amount of 30,000.' By the land of the old colonists is meant the coffee estates in the mountains; for the sugar plantations, long since deserted, are now grown over by the native woods; and in the fertile plains, once smiling with cultivation, and afterwards the scene of brutal massacre and inhuman cruelty, the wild hog now roams in undisturbed security. 'Our commerce,'

* 'The interior of their huts presents scarcely a single article of use; *no bed, 'nor table, nor even so much as a chair to sit down upon.* In one of these miserable 'habitations which I entered, was seated on a mat, a young female negro, about 'twenty years of age, with three infants; and in another corner a more elderly 'female, with a family more advanced. Both were the wives and families of 'the proprietor of the house, a negro, apparently about sixty. The women wore 'nothing on their bodies except a chemise, made of coarse Osnaburgh. The younger 'of the two was suckling an infant, and two round apertures were made in the 'garment, through which the full breasts projected, and were entirely exposed. 'The husband had no clothing, with the exception of a pair of Osnaburgh trowsers, 'the upper part of his body being altogether naked. All the younger branches of 'the family were in a state of entire nakedness. The abode presented upon the 'whole, such a spectacle of wretchedness, as to make me naturally conclude, that 'notwithstanding they enjoyed their own will, yet, in point of comfort, their situa- 'tion would not bear a comparison with that of any slave in our plantations.'

Extract from the Journal of a Gentleman who lately visited St. Domingo, published in the Edinburgh Magazine, for December, 1823.

continues Inginac, 'has considerably increased, of 'which you will have an idea by consulting the pa- 'per I send you containing the importations and 'exportations of the year 1822, collected at the dif- 'ferent custom houses; I am *nearly* certain that 'the quantity of coffee produced in 1823, surpasses 'more than a third the quantity produced in 1822, 'and there is *great probability*, that the crop of the 'present year will be still more considerable, be- 'cause more people are employed cultivating the 'fields, and they are *more* assiduous in their *tasks*, 'and *more* contented.' What these 'tasks' are, or who the taskmasters are, we are not informed, but as the government revenue depends upon their labour, perhaps it takes a friendly interest in the matter; at all events, if the Secretary General is to be believed, the free citizens have got both tasks, and taskmasters. What the amount of contentment is among the negroes under a mulatto despotism, is sufficiently evident; but the military power with which the government is armed, it would appear, is tremendous; and, happy people! they are now, '*more assiduous in their tasks, and more contented.*'

'The eastern part of the island,' continues the Secretary, '*appears at present* very well pleased to 'have returned under the laws of the republic; and 'all those in that part of the island who had opinions 'contrary to our institutions (and are not well 'pleased), *have wisely resolved* to retire to some other 'islands, so that at *present, there are* only good citi-

'zens devoted to the cause of their country.' It is not very clear from this, whether those who entertained opinions 'contrary to the institutions of the 'republic,' had left it or not; but it cannot be doubted that those who had property, and could get away, had, as the Secretary says, '*wisely resolved*' to do it.

It is really surprising to see such a document brought forward to support the cause; for, although the Secretary General evinces the greatest possible anxiety to give a favourable representation of the state of Hayti, the impression it makes is decidedly the reverse. His letter, or at least the part of it given, concludes in an heroic style, which, coming from any other Charibbean island, would have reminded the Reviewers of 'Captain Lemuel Gulliver,' or of 'Lord Grizzle in Tom Thumb;' but, coming from the 'New Empire,' as they call it, with its armed force of 158,848 men, is not to be treated with such scorn. 'If we are attacked,' says he, 'we will 'give the *whole universe* a proof of what can be ac- 'complished by men, who will not give up the inde- 'pendence of their country.' Who would have imagined that after this gasconade, they would have bought the acknowledgement of their independence, and promised a price for it, which it is evident they are unable to pay?

The late king, Christophe, whose authority is also quoted, is more candid; and, in a letter cited, instead of proclaiming the accomplishment of improvements, 'unprecedented in the history of the species,'

he only says, 'I am *endeavouring*, as far as possible, 'to inculcate the principles of religion and virtue, 'among my fellow-citizens:' he does not assert that he has accomplished this; or that his fellow-citizens have become in a few years 'civilized and even re-'fined;' on the contrary, he honestly desires his friend 'to consider what time is necessary, and what 'care and exertions are required, to effect the diffu-'sion of religious and moral feelings, among a people 'recently emerged from the gloom of ignorance and 'and slavery.'

But, say the Reviewers, lest such representations should be deemed partial, as coming from Haytians, and even public functionaries, we subjoin another authority, not liable to suspicion, viz. an extract from a report of a committee of a society at Philadelphia, called the American Convention for the abolition of slavery and improvement of the African race. Unfortunately, we cannot help considering this authority no less suspicious. But let us hear what the impartial African institution of Philadelphia reports on the subject. It is not said that any one of the members of the society, has ventured to visit St. Domingo, in order to ascertain the actual state of it, and the best means of 'improving the African race;' on the contrary, we find from the first sentence, that the report is made up from the representations of others (not the most unfavourable we presume), and from public documents printed in the island, '*from which*,' say they, '*it appears*, that 'the Haytians have made a progress in civilization

'and intellectual improvement, nearly, if not alto-
'gether, unparalleled in the history of nations; free-
'schools are established to a greater extent in pro-
'portion to the wants of the people, than is known
'in European countries.' What a happy illustration in addressing the people of the United States, who, equally ignorant how European countries are provided with schools, as how Hayti itself is provided, are not likely to challenge the correctness of the ingenious comparison! 'The government is
'efficient and *apparently* stable; it is republican in
'its form, the laws being passed by a legislative
'body chosen by the people. Yet, *it is said*, that
'the controul of the president is predominant, the
'military force being at his command. *He does not, however, appear* to abuse his authority,' &c.

Such is the hearsay account given of the state of education and of the government of Hayti. Let us now attend to what this report says respecting the condition of the people. 'The great body of men
'in all countries are hired labourers, who subsist on
'their wages, and the quantity of the means of sub-
'sistence given them for their services is perhaps the
'best criterion which can be obtained of the degree
'of happiness they enjoy, or of positive oppression
'they suffer. Trying the condition of the Haytians
'by this test it would appear decidedly better than
'that of the people of any European nation, and the
'citizens of the United States would be able to
'boast of no striking pre-eminence. The wages of

'the labourers in the Haytian sea-ports is *one dollar* '*per day.*'

The great body of men in all countries are the hired labourers, and we are to judge of the state of the great body of men in Hayti by the wages occasionally given on board of a foreign ship in a sea-port! The master of a ship, if his crew happens to get sick, a misfortune not very uncommon in a West Indian port, must give any rate of wages, even a dollar per day, to get his vessel loaded: but the truth is not fairly told; he pays the Haytians 'one dollar per day.' It may be so, but what kind of dollar, Spanish or American? Neither; but a current Haytian dollar of base metal, by which valuable coin, perhaps, the amount of imports, exports, and revenue, is estimated. How many of these go to a million sterling we have never been told.

Such is the evidence brought across the Atlantic to prove to the people of England the success of negro emancipation, and to encourage them to press the experiment upon their own colonies. It is to be hoped the next American report will furnish us with satisfactory reasons why the poor blacks they so charitably transported to that land of promise, where the great body of men are paid 'one dollar per day' for their labour, made so short a stay in it as Inginac reports.

One word more on education: we may be told on this side of the water of schools in Hayti for teaching 'history, geography, geometry and algebra,' (and

why not have added Greek and Hebrew ?) but never having heard of any Haytian who had acquired a knowledge of these branches of education in the island, we cannot help suspecting that these schools will be found as much *a hoax* as the 200,000 tons of shipping employed to carry 16 or 17 thousands tons of produce, or their armed force of 158,848 men! Reference has been made to their official documents to prove their scholarship, as if it followed that Boyer (originally, it is said, a tailor) was his own clerk or secretary; report attributes them to a young American from New England, who publishes the official newspaper called the Telegraph, at Port-au-Prince.

From what has been said it clearly appears that the dreadful massacres of the revolution in St. Domingo have not been compensated to humanity by any beneficial results. On the contrary, this beautiful island, once the richest and most valuable in the Western Archipelago, has become nearly a desert. Deprived of the light of civilization by the murder or expulsion of the Europeans, its rude population, now under a military despotism, is relapsing into African barbarism. With all the natural advantages which the most favoured soil and climate can boast, cultivation has disappeared; desolation is stamped on the face of the country; it is the last place on earth that an exile would choose for his home. The very outcast free blacks of North America have fled from it in horror.

The Edinburgh Review on 'the Spirit of West Indian Society.'

In a subsequent number of the Edinburgh Review (84), 'the spirit of West Indian society' is ascertained from a riot, and the destruction of a methodist chapel in Bridgetown, Barbadoes. Of that disgraceful transaction I never heard mention made in Jamaica, but in such terms as would be used in England in speaking of the late riots in Ireland; and it is just as fair and candid to judge of the inhabitants of Jamaica by a riot in Bridgetown, Barbadoes, as it would be in a foreign writer to illustrate 'the spirit of English society' by a minute and studied account of a riot in Connaught. Such conduct, however, on the part of the Review, can excite no surprise, because the uniform practice of the party has been, when any case of cruelty or violation of the law occurred in any of the colonies, to hold it up and dwell upon it in their speeches and publications, as a proof of the *general* ill-treatment of the slaves,—as a fair specimen of the manner in which all the colonists in all the islands act—in short, as manifesting '*the spirit of West Indian society*;' and we have no doubt that, as Mr. Brougham lately expressed himself, 'they feel deeply impressed with 'gratitude' to the rioters of Bridgetown for the outrage they committed.

Whatever was the provocation given, the conduct

of the rioters was disgraceful, and merits every term of reprobation. But when the matter is taken up and dwelt on in a manner evidently calculated to *injure the innocent* rather than to punish the guilty, to inflame and exasperate public feeling against the white people in all the islands, by representing the act of the Bridgetown mob as a manifestation of 'the spirit of West Indian society in general,' or as 'affording a view of the character and temper of the colonists,' (p. 497,) it is impossible but every virtuous mind must feel indignation at such injustice; and some perhaps may think *the spirit of the Review* not much more amiable than that of the rioters. What says 'that benevolent sect the quakers' to such conduct? Does religion justify the visiting the iniquities of the few upon the many? or are these the means which philanthropy must employ to accomplish its ends?

'Nothing or worse than nothing,' continues the Review in the same article, 'has been done by the 'colonial legislatures, to improve the condition of the 'slaves.' Of course the acts passed last session (1824) by the assembly of Jamaica to remove impediments to manumissions, and to encourage a change of the negro market from Sunday to Saturday, are 'nothing or worse than nothing'—they are at all events passed over unnoticed.

'Some bishops and other dignitaries of the church 'have been sent out, as if gentlemen from Oxford or 'Cambridge were the fittest teachers and the best 'missionaries among those benighted heathens.' Can

they give weight and influence to religion in the colonies? Can *they* be as fit to teach others as persons who are themselves only half educated? The Reviewers evidently think not. True it is, that, from the ignorance of the negroes, men of very moderate learning may be useful instructors to them; but really it appears strange how men could be disqualified for teaching, by having got a good education; and not very clear to common understandings, why sectarian teachers alone should be capable of instructing the negroes, as we are told they are, p. 494. Yet, were this the case, is religion to be limited to one class in the colonies? Are the negroes every thing, and the white and coloured classes nothing? or are we to understand that gentlemen from Oxford or Cambridge are considered unfit to teach these also?

We are not, however, left in the dark as to the cause of the prejudice against 'dignitaries of the 'church, and gentlemen from Oxford or Cambridge:' the reason why they are considered less fit teachers than sectarians, peeps out in the following paragraph. 'Bishop Lipscomb,' says the Review, 'after a few 'weeks' residence in Jamaica, transmitted a report 'as little marked by sound and sober sense, as his 'conduct had been by decorous impartiality.' p. 493. In other words, he spoke rather favourably of the colonists,—an unpardonable sin in the eyes of a party of which this impartial Journal is the oracle; and whose maxim is—disbelieve and vilify every person

who shall speak favourably of the colonists; give implicit belief to, and extol every person, who shall speak unfavourably of them.

Thus, although the favourable report of a bishop is made the subject of ridicule, because written when he had been only five or six weeks in the island, there is no objection on this score to the unfavourable report of John Meabery. This young lad, the son of a tradesman in London, was sent out to Jamaica, about the beginning of 1822, to be a book-keeper on Bushy Park Estate, in the parish of St. Dorothy. He reached that place, labouring under a disgusting complaint, for which he had the advice of Dr. Inchbauld, who attended the property; and after remaining from 14 to 18 days on the estate, confined a great part of the time to bed, and not employed in any way, he returned to enjoy the pleasures of London, and inform the Abolition Society of the state of things in Jamaica. His report of the oppressed condition of the negroes and the licentious manners of the white people, was published in a scandalous pamphlet, entitled *Negro Slavery*, and is highly extolled by the Reviewers, who class Mr. Meabery with Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bickell, or as one of the most unexceptionable witnesses against the colonists. *Ed. Rev.* No. 82. p. 488.

In the same article of the Review our attention is again directed to the flourishing state of Hayti; and the facts here given on official authority regarding the increase of its population, are as 'novel in the 'history of the species' as that told us in a former

number, of its rude and barbarous people becoming in a few years 'civilized and even refined.' At the commencement of the French revolution in 1792, the population of St. Domingo (then certainly better known than it has been since) was estimated at 665,000 persons of all descriptions, including 40,000 whites. p. 499. The official return in 1805, quoted by the Review, estimates it at 400,000, making the decrease or destruction of the people by the revolution and the subsequent wars between Petion and Christophe 265,000, considerably upwards of one third of the whole population of the country. By the census of 1824 it is said to be 935,335, shewing an increase of 535,335 upon a population of 400,000 in nineteen years!!! Unless we go back to the age of Deucalion and Pyrrha, when —

> Saxa
> Missa viri manibus, faciem traxere virilem;
> Et de femineo reparata est femina jactu—

there certainly has never been in the world an instance of such rapid increase in any country from native sources, and it is not pretended that there has been in St. Domingo any accession of foreigners. If the increase goes on at the same rate, the population of the island will in less than a century be upwards of 60 millions.*

* In some of the new states of North America the population may be, as the Reviewers inform us (No. 82. p. 500), doubled, trebled, quadrupled, nay, increased elevenfold in ten or twelve years; but it is perfectly childish to bring forward such statements in a disquisition on the comparative increase or decrease of the negroes in our colonies and in St. Domingo. Do the Reviewers actually believe that in those new states the population, even 'where they are all *free* inhabitants' increases *by breeding* elevenfold in twenty years? So it would certainly appear!

'Forth also has come,' say the Reviewers triumphantly, 'a report of the trade of Port-au-Prince, the 'chief, but very far from being the only port in the 'island, shewing that from thence, in 1824, was ex-'ported—

19,478,022 lbs. of Coffee.
871,085———Cotton.
821,629———Logwood.

In other words—

8795 Tons of Coffee.
389 ——— Cotton.
367 ——— Logwood.

Total 9551

It will be strange indeed, if the most sceptical are not convinced of the flourishing state of St. Domingo, when they learn from this second 'official 'report' which has come forth, that the produce shipped from its 'chief' port, and great mart of trade, in 1824, amounted to no less than 9,551 tons, while that of the Havannah during the same period amounted to 170,989 tons, and that of Kingston, in the comparatively little island of Jamaica, to upwards of 80,000! Why the exports from the other ports of St. Domingo are not given may be easily conjectured. But the SUGAR! what has become of it? Have the clouds ceased to drop down fatness, or the earth to give its increase? Cannot one single ounce of sugar be procured from 935,335 or nearly a MILLION of free labourers? What says our free-labour company to this? Have they sent out an agent to see what our brethren are doing? Can they not pre-

vail upon them to replant some of those fertile fields, which, previous to emancipation, with only half the present population to cultivate them, sent annually to Europe 230 millions of pounds of sugar?

Before concluding, let me recommend to the writer of this article in the Review, when he again enters upon a delineation of 'the spirit of West Indian so-'ciety,' to be at some pains to make his statements and reflections a little more consistent with one another than he has done in this. 'The *Club of Brothers*,' says he, 'who had given such unexceptionable 'proofs of their attachment to church and state, by 'insulting religion and committing treason, sent cer-'tain chosen deputies to admonish the true lovers of 'religion in the neighbouring islands to follow their 'laudable example. This band of agitators, ten in 'number, landed first at Tobago, but were com-'manded to quit the island in an hour; and next at 'Trinidad, where the governor ordered them off in 'five minutes. To Grenada they went, but they 'did not land there; for they found a body of sol-'diers on the shore ready to apprehend them; and 'these gentlemen in returning from their mission, 'had to tell the astonished Barbadians, that their 'neighbours were actually so far behind the inhabi-'tants of *Little England*, and, withal, so unaccount-'ably dull, as to deem resistance to the military and 'defiance of the governor, as not being the perfec-'tion of loyalty; nor the destruction of a chapel, 'and the persecution of an innocent family, the 'height of true piety.' p. 489.

Does this narrative bespeak the existence of the same 'spirit of society' in all the islands as in 'Little 'England?' Yet the writer of it concludes his laboured account of the outrage in Bridgetown by observing, that 'by far the most important and disgust-'ing feature of the whole case is, the view which it 'affords of the character and temper of the colonists.' p. 498.

It is somewhat remarkable too, that in the same number of this Review, which so strenuously and zealously advocates the cause of religion in a distant corner of the world, we find an article as strenuously advocating the establishment of a new university in the capital of the kingdom, *in which no religion whatever shall be taught!* 'We have been con-'sidering with much attention,' say these true lovers of religion, 'the difficulties which stand in the way 'of having any system of religion taught in the new 'university, and the more we reflect on these, the 'more insuperable they appear.' p. 503.*

Strictures on the Edinburgh Review; or Remarks on the Colony Trade.

THAT colonies were long considered of importance to European States, and that none was more eager than England to have, or more successful in obtaining them, is well known; but a new light has dawned upon us, and in the eighty-fourth number of the Edinburgh Review we learn, that the British

* See Appendix, No. 3.

colonies are not merely useless, but an actual burthen to the country, — and that, though an intregal and constituent part of our empire, (p. 282.) yet their separation, far from being injurious, would be a very great gain to us, (p. 302.)—because, as the Reviewers contend, sugar and all other colonial productions could be procured far more advantageously from foreigners, than they can be cultivated with British capital and industry.

Nor is the attaching a false value to colonies the only error of which our forefathers are convicted in that paper: the policy of their laws to secure the employment and increase of English shipping is no less condemned. 'Granting,' say the Reviewers, 'that in the event of the colonial monopoly being 'abolished, we might be obliged to use sugar that 'had been imported exclusively in foreign ships, 'that would not render us in the least disposed 'to question the propriety of its abolition. It has 'been usually supposed, that an extensive mer-'cantile is absolutely necessary to the possession of 'a great warlike navy; and the most vexatious and 'injurious restraints have been laid on commerce, 'for the sake of forcing the employment of ships 'and sailors. We are satisfied, however, that the 'idea is wholly without foundation. All that is re-'quired for the attainment of naval power, is the 'command of convenient harbours, and of wealth 'sufficient to build and man ships. However para-'doxical it may at first sight appear, it is neverthe-'less unquestionably true, that *the navy of Great*

'*Britain might be as formidable, or, if that was desir-*
'*able, infinitely more so, though we had not a single*
'*merchant ship.*' p. 297.

From a period nearly coeval with the settlement of the West India colonies, such of them as belonged to the Crown of Great Britain, have been compelled to send every article of their produce to England or her dependencies, and to take from thence every article of their supplies. No foreign ship has been permitted to enter their ports to exchange commodities, nor have the colonists been permitted to send a ship to exchange commodities in foreign ports; and the consequence has been a far more intimate connexion with, and greater dependence upon, the mother country, than is to be found between any of the other West India islands and the countries to which they belong. Within the last two or three years, however, some relaxations of the system, imperiously called for, have been made; and on this ground it is contended, by the anti-cololonial party, that the foreign growers of sugar ought forthwith to be admitted into the British market on the same terms as our own subjects.

But if the colonists derive an advantage from the monopoly of the home market, have they not paid dearly for it, by the restrictions imposed upon them, to secure a monopoly of their trade and consumption to the manufacturers, merchants, and ship-owners of the mother country? They have been excluded from the markets of foreign Europe ever since the passing of the Navigation Act, in 1660; but the hardships of the monopoly system have been more particularly

felt since the date of the independence of the American colonies, when the intercourse of the United States with our West India Islands was put under severe restrictions, partly to deprive them of the trade, and of the market they had there for provisions and lumber, but chiefly with a view to give our northern colonies a monopoly of supplying the islands with these articles. Since that period, the history of the colony trade has been nothing but a record of sufferings and complaints. The citizens of the United States have been in a great measure excluded from it, but it has been by regulations, equally oppressive to the colonists as to the Americans, and rendered endurable to the former only by temporary suspensions of the law, at the discretion of Governors, or of the King in Council, when the restrictions had produced actual famine. Nor, indeed, was famine always considered sufficient to warrant a departure from the exclusive system, as B. Edwards records, that, in consequence of a succession of hurricanes in Jamaica, between 1780 and 1785, not less than 15,000 negroes were computed to have perished from want, whose lives would have been preserved, had ships of the United States been allowed to import provisions into the colonies.

In 1812, a declaration of war against England by the United States, not only put an end to all intercourse in any way between them and the islands, but greatly aggravated the sufferings of the colonists, by rendering it almost impossible for them to get supplies of any kind, even from the British North American provinces. But, as an intregal and con-

stituent part of the empire, they suffered without a murmur; and their loss became the gain of English merchants and ship-owners. Staves were carried, at an enormous rate of freight, from Canada and Hamburgh, to London, expensively made up into casks there*, re-shipped, and carried out to the colonies, and again brought home filled with produce, the sale of which often did little more than pay the cost of the casks, and charges. The planter himself had the smallest share of the profits of his capital and industry.

When the treaty of Ghent had restored peace, a commercial treaty was concluded between England and the United States; and it is well known, that if our Government would have treated on liberal, or even reasonable terms, an advantageous arrangement might have been made for the colonies also; but England would not hear of any participation by a foreign power in her colony trade. No, that was an *English* trade, and English vessels only were to have the advantage of it. English vessels accordingly got it; but, by way of retaliation, the Government of the United States imposed upon them a tonnage duty of two dollars and a half per ton, and other enormous charges, on entering their ports from the colonies, even in ballast. This system, mutually complained of, was continued about three years,

* Sugar and rum casks are usually made up by the slaves. Every estate has a few negroes employed as carpenters, masons, and coopers; and many of the negroes have become so handy at coppersmiths' and blacksmiths' work, that it is going altogether out of the hands of white tradesmen.

when an Act of Congress, in 1817, put an end to it, by declaring that no vessels should, on any terms, be admitted into the ports of the United States, coming from ports from which ships of the United States were excluded; the President being at the same time authorised to re-open the ports to colony vessels, provided England should open her colonial ports to American vessels.

As the countries were dependent on an exchange of commodities, and mutually desirous to trade with one another, it now became necessary for them (particularly for England, on account of her colonies) to devise some expedient or means of trafficking together, under an exclusion from one another's ports; and this was happily hit upon, by making Bermuda a depôt, where they should each carry their respective commodities, and exchange them for those of the other.* On this occasion, we may fancy the following dialogue to have passed between these two great and enlightened nations: — 'Your ships 'shall not enter the ports of my West India colonies,' says England. 'Then ships from your West India 'colonies shall not enter my ports,' answers America. 'But,' adds England, 'my West India colonies can-

* In a table of the territorial extent of the different colonies, their productions imported into England, &c. copied in the Review from Mr. Marshall's *Statistical Illustrations of the British Empire*, p. 290, the productions which the Bermudas send to this country are stated to be 3,415 cwt. of sugar, 769 ditto of coffee, and 218 gallons of rum; but there is neither a sugar cane nor a coffee tree in these islands. Their principal production is the juniper cedar tree, of which they build small fast-sailing vessels, which are principally engaged in carrying fish from Newfoundland to the West India islands.

'not well dispense with some of your commodities: 'suppose, therefore, we fix on an intermediate 'station, the little island of Bermuda, for instance, 'where each country shall carry its commodities, 'and put them down for the other; we may thus 'continue to traffick, and yet each keep its ports 'shut against ships of the other?' 'As you please 'in that,' replies America. 'Your West India co-'lonies owe their formation and prosperity, in no 'small degree, to their connection with me, while 'under one government; they cannot even now 'exist without my commodities, and these they shall 'not have, unless I am allowed an equal share in 'the trade.* Ever since my separation from you, 'it has been your selfish and preposterous policy to 'deprive me of any share of this trade; and what 'has been the consequence? more injury, by far, to 'your own colonial subjects than to me: witness the 'proclamations of your governors, and your orders 'in council, from time to time suspending your mo-'nopoly laws, to permit, or rather to invite me, to 'bring temporary supplies to your half-famished 'and ruined colonists; witness also your island of

* For the supply of those essential articles, lumber, fish, flour, and grain, America seems to have been happily fitted, as well from internal circumstances, as her commodious situation; and it is to a neighbourly intercourse with that continent, continued during one hundred and thirty years, that our sugar colonies, in a great measure, owe their prosperity; insomuch that, according to the opinion of a very competent judge, Mr. Long, if the continent had been wholly in the hands of a foreign power, and the English precluded from all commerce or intercourse with it, it is a very doubtful point, whether, in such case, we should at this hour have possessed a single acre of land in the West Indies.

B. Edwards's Hist. of the West Indies, Book xi. chap. iv.

'Jamaica, reduced to the necessity of importing my 'commodities, flour and lumber, at a ransom, from 'Cuba and St. Thomas's; now, you say, they are 'to be supplied through Bermuda: be it so.'

This memorable trade continued about three years to the great delight of the Bermudians, who, however, were the only profiters by it. Very different was the case of the unfortunate planters, who having to pay two freights on the bulky article of lumber (required both for their buildings and to make packages for their produce) with the additional expences of twice loading and twice unloading every cargo, found the cost of it ruinously enhanced; while to the English and American merchants and shipowners engaged in the trade, it proved unsatisfactory and unprofitable. At this time, staves were also carried north from Virginia to New Brunswick, and re-shipped from thence to the West Indies.

By the end of the year 1821, the struggle between the countries had been continued so long, that many Americans despaired of seeing England give up the point; and in the middle states, Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, the people were clamorous that their own government should yield it. The public prints were occupied with the subject; numerous respectable meetings were held in the principal towns, to petition Congress to re-open the ports. In their petitions it was represented that England possessed such boundless resources, that the United States could not hope to bring her to terms of reciprocity, and that they were only injuring themselves by the

attempt. I am persuaded the English government might at this time have made a treaty by which the trade should have been placed on a very advantageous footing for her shipping interest, as well as for the colonies. The general trade of America was labouring under great difficulties, and greater importance was attached to the trade with the British West India colonies than it has since been found to deserve. At this time I happened to be in America, and I well remember the surprise of many, and the joy of all, when it began to be whispered in New York, in December 1821, that the English government had actually resolved to give up the point, and throw open the West India trade to vessels of the United States. Speedily the report got into the newspapers, and afforded a triumph to the 'Democrats.' The towns that had petitioned were scouted for their selfishness and want of spirit in recommending to the government to degrade the country by opening its ports to a trade from which its own vessels were excluded, or supposing that they were not able to compel England to submit to terms of reciprocity. It was at the same time announced, that the commercial treaty with England, entered into at the peace of Ghent, and then about expiring, had been renewed; that the Columbia river had been agreed to as the western boundary; and the right to the fisheries, so anxiously sought, and for which a large consideration was at one time said to have been offered, had been gratuitously placed on the same footing as before the war. These were too trifling

matters to occupy public attention in England; but in America, where they were better understood and more fully appreciated, they were considered as great points gained, and were consequently the cause of much exultation.

This brings us to the era of Mr. Robinson's bill in 1821, by which the colony ports were thrown open to the vessels of the United States. This had become in a great degree a measure of necessity. The low price of sugar for several years preceding, had not paid the expense of the cultivation, and the distress of the planters was so much aggravated by the high prices which they had to pay for their supplies of lumber and other articles, in consequence of the American non-intercourse acts, that they were threatened with general ruin. Yet from the distress which existed on the other side also, and from the great anxiety manifested by the Americans in their petitions to Congress, to have a participation in the trade (and even to let it be carried on in English vessels direct, rather than that it should be continued through Bermuda), there is much reason to think that more favourable terms might have been obtained, had we treated for them; and it is mortifying to reflect, that we suffered so much in vain. The point had been contested from the time that the States of the Union became independent; for the last seven years in particular, an obstinate struggle had been maintained between the countries, and at an incalculable sacrifice to the colonists. Peace with France, which removed the obstructions that had so long excluded

their products from the continent of Europe, only involved them in another struggle, by which they were in a great measure excluded from the markets of the North American continent; markets exceedingly important to them, as it was there only they could barter their rum for those important necessaries, lumber and flour. By being excluded from these markets, they were obliged to pay double, nay, treble prices for many of their foreign supplies; they were prevented from getting their rum (then almost unsaleable in Europe) disposed of to their neighbours, their old and principal customers for it; or it went to them burthened with such ruinous charges by circuitous voyages and retaliatory duties as were almost equivalent to a prohibition. By these exceedingly impolitic regulations, following the war, the Americans were necessitated to resort to other means of supplying themselves. They built large distilleries, which are supplied with molasses principally from the Spanish islands, (with which they enjoy a perfectly free trade), and the people having got accustomed to New England rum, which, as it pays no duty, is of course much cheaper than West Indian, they have become in a great measure independent of us: and thus an injury has been done to the colonists, which no new system can repair. May it be a lesson to us in the regulations of our trade with the new states of the South American continent!

A fatal error in the Act of 1822 was a clause (copied I believe from former acts), requiring that when an American vessel should enter any of our enume-

tated free ports, and take on board a cargo of colonial produce, the same should be carried direct to the country or state in America to which such ship or vessel belonged; and that, before the shipment thereof, security by bond should be given by the master and exporter, in a penalty equal to half the value of the cargo, for the due landing thereof at the port for which entered. The object of this regulation of course was to prevent the Americans from carrying colonial produce to Europe, and the clause, it is most likely, was first suggested by the English ship-owners. But, however this might be, the restriction was totally useless; for the plantations being owned in England, and the far greater part of them mortgaged to merchants there, the danger that much of the produce would be sent to the continental markets, either in American or British vessels, was small indeed; besides, that the exporter, or agent, to whom a foreign vessel came consigned in the colonies, having no power over her after her leaving port, could not undertake any such responsibility. The clause, consequently, never was acted upon; but it furnished an admirable excuse to the government of the United States for a retaliatory regulation, not, like ours, impracticable and nominal, but substantial, and to their shipping most advantageous. It was enacted by Congress, that any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the United States, might be exported *directly* to any of the enumerated British colonial ports in any British vessel *coming directly from* any of the said enumerated ports, but that a ship enter-

ing from England should not be permitted to take on board a cargo for the colonies, or, *vice versâ*, entering from the colonies, to take on board a cargo for England. The effect of this regulation has been to throw nearly the whole of the trade between the United States and the British West India colonies into the hands of the Americans, while, had no such restrictions been imposed, it would not only have been retained as an English trade, but the English shipping would have been able to command a larger share of the direct trade between England and America. The West India ships combining the advantages of carrying three cargoes in one voyage, would have taken the bulky articles of coals, salt, and crockery ware from England to the United States, and delivering these would have carried lumber to the West India islands at a cheaper rate, with the advantage of sugar cargoes home, than it would have been possible for ships of the United States to carry those articles from England to America, or lumber from America to our West India islands. The Americans are perfectly aware of this, and continue to enforce their regulation, although ours never was acted upon, and has lately been repealed. The result to the planters is, that instead of getting their American supplies carried to them at a low freight by the ships that bring home their produce, they must depend on American vessels, and as these generally go home in ballast, they must have such an outward freight on the lumber as will pay the whole expense of the voyage, while many of the English

ships (by which it might so well have been carried at a very moderate freight) are going out to the colonies *in ballast.* The trade of Cuba is exceedingly important to the shipping of the United States, as it gives them in an eminent degree the advantages which, but for the restrictions that have been described, we should possess between England and America, and between America and the colonies. The far greater part of the produce of that island is carried to Europe in *their* vessels, which return with European cargoes either directly to the island, or to the United States, from which they again proceed with lumber, provisions, &c. to Cuba. And when England shall have adopted the counsel of the Reviewers, and abandoned our sugar islands to our rivals, the advantages which the Americans will then possess, will enable them not only to keep the direct trade from the North American continent to the West India islands, but to command in a great measure the trade between the continents of Europe and North America; for the carriage of their own productions to the islands, and of the productions of the islands to Europe, will effectually secure to them the trade from Europe to their own continent. The subjoined statement of the trade of the Havannah in 1823 will shew its magnitude, and the great share of it which the Americans have. The number of merchant vessels of all nations that entered the port that year was 1168, of which no less than 708 were American.*

* Commerce of Havannah.—Our correspondent at Havannah, has put us in possession of a statement of the tonnage which has entered the port of Havannah,

But this is not all: the trade between the British West India colonies and the United States is clogged with other restrictions, not likely to be easily removed. Both the act of 1822, and that

---

from the first of January to the 31st of December, 1823, inclusive, from which it appears that from the United States the amount of *American* tonnage was 82628¼, Spanish 3862¾, and other nations 336, making together 87027; from Great Britain, it was in British 7910¾, *American* 3490, making 11400¾; from Netherlands, in Dutch 2003, *American* 667, making together 2670; from France, in French 2061, *American* 4655¼, and other nations 1104½, making 7820¾; North and South of Europe, in Hamburgh 3168, Bremen 3225, Danish 1969, and other nations 2245, making 10607; Gulph of Mexico, in Spanish 10207½, *American* 1730¼, British 1807¾, and other nations 5316, making 14277; West Indies and Canaries, in Spanish 3221, *American* 5171, British 4442½, and other nations 1391½, making 13226: South America, in *American* 3746½, British 760, and other nations 1118½, making 5625; Spain in Spanish 14199, *American* 3379, British 758, making 18336. There entered during the year, 274 Spanish merchantmen, 708 *American*, 96 English, 19 Dutch, 18 French, 16 Hamburgh, 15 Danish, 15 Bremen, 4 Swedish, 1 Hanoverian, 1 Oldenburgh, and 1 Lubeck, 61 Spanish Spanish vessels of war, 53 *American*, 34 English, and 1 French, which makes a total of 1317 vessels.—*Wilmington (Del.) Gazette.*

It thus appears, that however contemptuous an opinion certain theorists in England may entertain of the colony trade, our rivals on the other side of the water neither despise nor neglect it. These theorists have not explained what difference, as a source of wealth, there is between the colony and the coasting trade of Great Britain—between the carriage of coals from Newcastle to London, and the carriage of sugar from Jamaica. If we may admit foreign vessels into the one trade without injury, why not into the other? And if foreign sugar ought to be freely admitted to our markets (as is contended), on the same terms as that of the British colonies, why not also foreign corn, cattle, timber, and every description of manufactured goods, if from any quarter they can be procured cheaper? The same principle applies to all.

I am far from meaning that restrictions on trade, and monopolies, may not be carried too far; but at the present moment there seems more danger to be apprehended from the cry for free trade—which in the existing state of the world may also be carried too far, and with no less ruinous consequences. Its sure effect would be to impoverish the rich, and to enrich the poorer countries. Having felt the inconveniences of the old system, we are in danger of going to the other extreme.

of last session, impose a duty in the colonies on all articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of the United States, while the same articles imported from our own Northern colonies are admitted duty free. I do not say that this is unreasonable on our part; far from it;—but it is deemed so by the Americans, and met by a retaliatory regulation most injurious to the British West India colonies. Thus, while a ship of the United States entering a port in Jamaica, pays no higher charges than an English ship, an English ship entering a port of the United States from Jamaica, is subjected to an extra tonnage duty of one dollar per ton, and to an additional duty of 10 per cent. on the value of the cargo,—which in effect gives their shipping an advantage exactly to that amount over British vessels in their freights. This will be better understood by mentioning that the difference of duty on a puncheon of rum is something above four dollars; consequently a merchant in Jamaica sending rum to the United States, generally finds it for his interest to give the carriage of it to an American vessel at a small freight (or less than four dollars), even while his own vessel is sailing at the same time, and from the same port, in ballast.

Again: our own regulations have limited the American trade to certain enumerated free ports where custom houses are established. This regulation was adopted for the protection of the revenue, or rather to prevent the clandestine importation of articles which the mother-country has prohibited or

imposed heavy duties upon for the protection of her manufacturers and agriculturists. How far such a restriction is necessary for this purpose, I pretend not to say; but it bears hard on the planters, particularly as respects the bulky article of lumber, the removal of which from one place to another is attended with so heavy an expense. For instance, between Morant Bay and Port Antonio, two of the enumerated free-ports in Jamaica, there is an extent of 60 miles of coast, possessing several harbours, (and one of the best in the island,) from whence a large quantity of produce is exported, and where consequently, a great many staves, shingles, &c. are required. When a cargo of lumber from the United States is wanted in one of these ports, it must first be landed at Morant Bay or Port Antonio; and the expense incurred in landing, re-shipping, and freight to a coasting vessel for carrying it 10 or 20 miles along the coast, is equal to half the freight from America.

Allowing, as all do, that the principles upon which ministers have lately acted with regard to the colony trade, are liberal and calculated in time, if adhered to, to be highly beneficial, it is altogether unfair to represent the measures that have been adopted as affording much immediate relief. The only one of them from which the colonists can yet be said to have derived any advantage whatever, is that which allowed a renewal of the intercourse with the United States of America, an intercourse which they cannot exist without, and which in truth it never perhaps was meant wholly to exclude them from, although it

has been obstinately and absurdly attempted to exclude the ships of the United States from any share of the trade between their own ports and our colony ports. Whether the restraints by which this intercourse is still fettered (and now more on the part of America than of England) can all be removed, I presume not to say. There are points which will not easily be adjusted. The government of the United States insists on our admitting their produce into our West India colonies, on the same terms as the produce of Canada: it would not be more unreasonable to insist on the wheat of the United States being received in England on the same terms as the wheat of Canada: or in us to insist on the sugar of Jamaica being admitted into the port of New York, on the same terms as the sugar of Louisiana. If both governments would agree to act on the liberal system, the trade would easily be adjusted; but if one will not, the other scarcely can. We may concede advantages to others as fast as we please, but we shall do it to our own wrong, unless other countries will meet our concessions with concessions on their part also; we may admit the salted beef, pork, bacon, lumber, and fish of the United States to our West India islands, on the same terms as we admit them from Ireland, and from our own provinces in North America; but it is clear the advantage will be on the part of America, so long as she burdens all our colonial produce and British goods with the enormous duties which are now levied upon them. Mr. Huskisson has acknowledged the difficulty of effect-

ing an equitable arrangement with the United States, and has endeavoured to overcome it by allowing the colonies a direct intercourse with the north of Europe, whence he thinks they may procure supplies of lumber, &c. It is much to be wished, that this trade may succeed, but the chances are certainly against it. The expense of staves and lumber is not in the first cost, but in the freight and charges; and these articles being in abundance within a few days' sail of the islands, they never can be carried so cheap, at least to any extent, from a distant part of the world.

Whatever advantage the colonists may in time derive from permission to send their produce direct to foreign markets in Europe, it is manifest, that long established channels of commerce, cannot soon be changed; new acquaintances and new connexions are to be formed, and more especially must such change require time in the case of West Indian commerce. A British merchant holding a mortgage on a West Indian estate, has the direction of the produce (it is the greatest temptation to advance money to the planters), and will command it home that he may have the mercantile profits, freight, commission, and insurance; and foreign merchants will be backward to invest their capital in a commerce, over which they have no controul, and of the stability of which there is so little certainty; for, independent of the chances of war, where is their security that England will not again change her system and resume the

monopoly of her colonial trade, if it shall become her interest to do so?

The bill of 1822 allowed produce to be shipped from the colonies direct to the continent of Europe; and the fact, that up to the present year only one small cargo (which went to Hamburgh) had been shipped from Jamaica to a foreign port in Europe, is pretty conclusive proof how little this new regulation has yet benefited the colonists. In the meantime, however, the Edinburgh Review, which deems hostility to the colonists the very perfection of patriotism and philanthropy, founding on the recent relaxations of the colony monopoly, (which, after all, have not perhaps placed the trade on any more favourable footing for the colonists than it stood upon when they had a free and unfettered intercourse with the states in North America, previous to the revolution in 1774), contends that they have now got an undue advantage in their trade with the mother country which they ought to be deprived of. 'The colonists were entitled,' says that journal, 'to demand that they should 'be exclusively entitled to supply us with colonial 'products, so long as we forced them to resort ex- 'clusively to our markets for what they had to buy. 'But now that we have relieved them from these 'vexatious restraints; that we allow them to resort 'to all the markets of the world, they have no longer 'the shadow of a claim to the monopoly of the Bri- 'tish market. It is plain, therefore, that ministers 'will not be treating both parties impartially and

'fairly, if they stop where they now are. Having 'done so much, they must do more. Having 'deprived the merchants of Great Britain of the 'monopoly of the colony trade, they are bound in 'consistency, and in justice to the people of Britain, 'to deprive the colonists of the monopoly of the 'British market.' p. 302.

Now what says Mr. Huskisson's bill? Simply this—that to protect the interest of the mother country, the colonists shall on no terms whatever be permitted to import from foreign countries, the important articles, dried and pickled fish, salted beef, pork, or bacon, whale oil, &c., (which might be purchased in the United States at nearly as many dollars, as they cost pounds sterling in Great Britain): —that they shall not import soap, glass manufactures, &c. from foreign countries, without paying a duty of 20 per cent. on the value; nor leather manufactures, linen, &c. without paying a duty of 30 per cent.: and, that in order to encourage the industry of our fellow subjects in the British North American provinces, the West India colonists shall pay 5s. of duty on every barrel of flour they import from the United States, or other foreign countries; 21s. of duty on every thousand feet of white pine lumber; 14s. (or upwards of 50 per cent. of the value) on every thousand shingles, and so in proportion for other articles. True, these are concessions to the colonists, and great concessions, considering the galling manner in which their commerce was previously fettered by the monopoly laws;—consider-

ing, that only a few years ago, the island of Jamaica durst not admit a foreign vessel into its ports with a cargo of lumber, even when the planters were actually losing their rum, from the impossibility of procuring white oak staves (the only kind of wood that answers the purpose) to make casks to contain it; when many of them had not a dry corner in their house to sleep in, from the impossibility of procuring shingles to cover the roofs; nay, even when their people were perishing by famine, in consequence of a succession of hurricanes by which the island was desolated, they durst not admit a foreign ship with food. Matters are now happily improved; it having been found, that we could not exclude the Americans from a participation in a trade from their own ports; some salutary relaxations of our system have been agreed to, and ministers having done so much, we are told, 'they must do more.' Well, what more must they do to act impartially and fairly? Must they give British colonial productions the same protection from competition in the markets of the mother country that they give to the productions of the mother country in the colonies? Is this what consistency, and even-handed justice require of them? Very different, indeed, is the opinion of the Edinburgh Reviewers: passing over the circumstance, that the mother country has reserved an exclusive right to supply some of the more important articles which the colonies stand in need of; and has protected her manufactures by heavy duties on those of foreigners, they would persuade their readers that

every thing has now been conceded to the colonists: that every restraint on their commerce has now been removed; and therefore, say they, let them be deprived of every advantage in the home market; let the sugars of the Brazils and of Cuba, of Columbia and Louisiana, be admitted on the same terms as theirs, that we may buy the article where we can get it cheapest.

The articles which the mother country furnishes to the colonies are, as already noticed, protected from foreign competition by prohibiting altogether the importation of some, and allowing the importation of others, only under a duty of 20 and even 30 per cent. But the articles which the colonies furnish to the mother country, ought to have no protection from the competition of foreigners. Such is the justice which the Reviewers would give to the colonists!

To conclude: the language which this impartial journal would have the people of the mother country make use of to their fellow subjects and brethren, living in, or owning property in the West India colonies, is in substance as follows:

'You form, it is true, an integral and constituent 'part of the empire,' p. 282; 'but we shall gain 'greatly by lopping you off from it,' p. 302. 'The 'monopoly of your consumption, and the carriage of 'your produce, is no advantage to us,'* p. 283. 'We have no greater certainty of maintaining our

* Monopoly and altogether, the colony trade, even as it is carried on at present, is advantageous, and greatly advantageous to Great Britain. *Smith's Wealth of Nations*, Book iv. Chap. vii.

'trade with you, than our trade with foreign states; 'because the whole navy of Great Britain, if it were 'doubled, could not prevent you from buying from 'foreigners, if they could sell you cheaper.' 'Cheap 'goods (cargoes of flour and lumber for instance) are 'sure to make their way through every barrier; *per 'medios ire satellites amant.*' p. 285. 'We are not, 'and never have been, in the least dependent upon 'you for colonial productions; Prussia and Ger-'many, though they have neither ships nor colonies, 'are, and have been, as regularly supplied as Eng-'land.' p. 286.

'It is true that we have made your trade subser-'vient to the interest of our merchants, manufac-'turers, and ship-owners; that we imposed galling 'and vexatious restrictions upon your commerce,' p. 281; 'that we did not allow you, during the late 'war, to sell your sugar and coffee to neutrals: that 'since the independence of your neighbours in the 'United States of America was acknowledged, we 'have either wholly prohibited their having any in-'tercourse with you, or clogged it with the most 'vexatious restrictions; in order, as far as possible, 'to keep the monopoly of your trade and consump-'tion to ourselves,' p. 311.; 'that in struggling to 'support our shipping interest, we have compelled 'you to purchase your American supplies at a ran-'som; and that we have guided the stream of your 'trade so exclusively into our own ports, that you 'scarcely know, even the name of a merchant in 'Trieste, Amsterdam, or Hamburgh. But now,

'having estranged you from the rest of the world; 'having got the most of your estates mortgaged to 'merchants in this country; and having rendered 'you as helpless as caged birds, we propose to set 'you free from the monopoly grasp. Your wings are 'clipped, you cannot fly far; if there is still any 'benefit to be derived from you, we are sure of 'having it.'

'Do you think hard of this? We tell you the 'compact or understanding that we should buy from 'you and you from us, was meant to be binding, 'only so long as it suited *our* interest. We passed 'certain acts regulating the colony trade, but it was 'not stipulated that these acts should continue in 'force any longer, than suited our purpose,' p. 293; 'to consider such *solemn contracts* (as Mr. Fox ab- 'surdly enough termed this) to be any longer bind- 'ing, would be to eternize the worst errors,' p. 294; 'it would be as ridiculous to suppose that we have 'not a right to annul, without your consent, those 'acts of parliament on which the connexion or com- 'pact is founded, as to suppose, that we have not a 'right to alter our corn law of 1815, or any other law, 'which we, by our representatives, may make for our 'own government; your not being represented in 'parliament, and the many ages that we have forced 'the system upon you, and that you have acted on 'the faith of it, not making the slightest difference 'in the case.' p. 293.

'You allege that the abolition of the slave trade 'has placed you under a relative disadvantage as

'compared with the planters of Brazil and Cuba, 'having raised the price of slaves, or in other words 'of labour, much above what it is in the colonies of 'those powers who still carry it on; and that justice 'requires, we should force those powers to abolish 'the slave trade before we open our markets to their 'sugars. But this argument is destitute of any real 'weight; for, however strange it may appear that 'the African race should improve under your *bru-* '*talizing* system of management (as Mr. Stephen so 'well describes it), a slave who has been bred in the 'West Indies, and trained to habits of subordination 'and industry, is much more valuable than one who 'has been newly imported from Africa (where, ac- 'cording to the same authority, slaves are so much 'better treated); consequently, though he costs 'more money, he is not dearer; and therefore it fol- 'lows, that labour is as cheap with you as in Cuba.' p. 294.*

'It is indeed most probably true, that the granting 'of liberty freely to import colonial products from

* 'Does a Smithfield drover care for the love or the hatred of his oxen? And 'yet his oxen, since the passing of Mr. Martin's meliorating act, are scarcely in a 'more unprotected condition than the slaves in our islands.' *Edinburgh Review*, No. 82. p. 475. 'The terror, the degradation, stunted intellects, and premature 'decay of the frame, resulting from protracted tyranny, and continued through 'successive generations, make up a greater sum of human misery, than was ever 'witnessed in the paroxysm of any revolution!' *Id.* p. 485.

Such is the truly wretched condition of the negroes in our islands, with little more protection than oxen in Smithfield market: their intellects are becoming stunted, their frames are hastening into premature decay; and yet they are improving and becoming more valuable! 'A slave who has been bred in the West Indies, who 'has been trained to habits of subordination and industry, is much more valuable 'than one who has been newly imported from Africa.' No. 84. p. 294.

'foreign markets would be ruinous to you; but that 'is no reason why it should not be granted.' p. 300. 'Is it not a well known fact, that the price of sugar 'in this country for seven years past, raised by the 'enormous bounty and the monopoly which you have 'of our market, has averaged little less than 60s. the 'cwt. in the London market? Can you deny, that 'after deducting therefrom 27s. to the treasury for 'duty, 5s. to the ship-owner for freight, and 5s. to 'the merchant for insurance, commission, brokerage, '&c. there remained to you no less than 23s., or 'nearly 2½d. per pound to repay the cost and freight 'of the annual supplies you imported from England, 'Ireland, and America, the cost of cultivation, and 'the interest of capital invested in your estates? Is 'not this allowing you a great deal too much? and 'has it not been repeatedly shewn, that a reduction 'of the duties on sugar from the East Indies and 'South America to the same level with those laid on 'West India sugars, would enable us to obtain as 'good sugar at a penny or a half-penny the pound, 'as we must pay you 2½d. the pound for?' p. 289.

'It may be, that depending on foreign countries 'for sugar, which is now become a necessary with 'the poor as well as the rich, we may be obliged to 'admit it in foreign vessels. That signifies nothing; 'for, (though our foolish forefathers thought other-'wise, and our ambitious rivals the United States of 'America have imbibed the error from them), it is 'unquestionably true that a great mercantile is not 'at all necessary to the possession of a great warlike

'navy; the navy of Great Britain might be as for-
'midable, or, if that were desirable, infinitely more
'so, though we had not a single merchant ship.
'Away then with your ships and your colonies—a
'few cotton spinners, tailors, and weavers will make
'just as good seamen in our day of need, and just
'as surely beat the Yankees, as sailors that were
'apprenticed cabin-boys and have spent their lives
'at sea.'

'But you think you are part of us, our own sons
'and brothers, and that we ought to buy from you
'in preference to foreigners, because you would
'again return to us every farthing of the money,
'while they might take it away to other countries.
'We desire not your money, we disclaim all con-
'nexion with you. What are you to us? If the
'Atlantic ocean should pass over you, and your place
'know you no more, what should *we* lose?' No. 82.
p. 481.

'We cannot indeed deny, that we long carried on
'a lucrative trade, buying slaves in Africa, and car-
'rying them to the West Indies, where we sold them
'to you for a great deal of money; but we have
'repented of that, thank God! and to make amends
'for our sins and redeem the national conscience, we
'have, with great liberality on our part, resolved to
'emancipate by our paramount power, the poor slaves
'we sold to you, and give them your estates; to
'which we consider it most unreasonable in you
'to make any objections. But you do object to
'this! You even talk of withdrawing your alle-

'giance if we attempt to enforce our benevolent de-
'signs. Look to it that we do not take you at your
'word. If we suspend our protection, if we recall
'our 1500 troops from Jamaica, in a month the knife
'is at your throats.' No. 82. p. 481. 'Do you think
'your republican neighbours and brothers would
'deem you worth *their* protection? that they would
'send a few hundred troops to garrison your forts,
'and a few of the ships of the line which they have
'been lately building to fight us, to protect you? or
'that they would condescend to add you as a star to
'the banner of the Union? No, they are too unas-
'piring,—witness Louisiana—witness the Floridas,
'and their manifest indifference about "the noble
'island of Cuba.'"

A Letter to Robert Hibbert, Jun. Esq. in reply to his Pamphlet entitled 'Facts verified upon Oath, in contradiction of the Report of the Rev. Thomas Cooper, concerning the general condition of the Slaves in Jamaica,' &c. &c. To which are added, a Letter from Mrs. Cooper to R. Hibbert, Jun. Esq. and an Appendix, containing an exposure of the falsehoods and calumnies of that gentleman's affidavit-men. By Thos. Cooper. 1824.

The West Indies as they are; or a real picture of Slavery: but more particularly as it exists in the Island of Jamaica. In three parts. With Notes. By the Rev. R. Bickell, a member of the University of Cambridge, &c. &c. &c. 1824.

THERE is naturally a more than common degree of credit attached to the testimony of a clergyman: we are disposed to view men clothed with the sacred office, as what they are sometimes called, 'ministers of the truth;' we regard them as in some degree exempted from the tumultuous passions and jarring interests which inflame and mislead other men; we expect to find in their own subdued passions and well-regulated lives, an example of the Christian virtues they inculcate on others—truth, humility, and charity; and with these impressions, we listen to them with a degree of confidence we cannot so easily repose in others. How far the reverend authors before us have shewn themselves deserving of such confidence, the remarks which follow may in some degree enable the reader to determine.

'Out of thy own mouth will I condemn thee,' is

the text chosen as a motto by Mr. Cooper, who modestly expects that his statements will be considered entitled to equal, if not greater credit, than the solemn affirmations upon oath of three gentlemen filling offices of trust and respectability—assigning as a reason, that 'he is living under the influence of the 'fear of God,' while *they* are living in the habitual 'and daily disregard of the obligations of morality 'and religion.'

'Men,' says he, 'who live in the habitual and daily disregard of the obligations of morality and religion, cannot be under the influence of the fear of God: hence it must be more easy for them to appeal to heaven in confirmation of a mis-representation, or even a falsehood, than it is for the upright to make a serious declaration of a contested fact; for the anxieties which the latter feel, lest, in any thing they should err from the truth, are utterly unknown to the former, their consciences being rendered torpid through iniquity.' p. 16.

I shall satisfy myself with noticing a few only of the more important points at issue between the parties. In reference to statements published on Mr. Cooper's authority, in a book called Negro Slavery, Mr. Oates, the manager or attorney of the estate of Georgia, on which Mr. Cooper resided when in Jamaica, swears,

'That on one occasion a complaint was made to him, that a boy named John Harding, who was waiting upon Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, had received a very severe and cruel punishment from the overseer (who was afterwards discharged), and on investigating the matter, he was told that it had been inflicted at the particular direction of Mr. Cooper; and when deponent complained of it to Mr. Cooper, he acknowledged that he had given such directions, but attempted

to palliate his conduct by saying, that the overseer had been more severe than he *intended*. The punishment, however, created a very extraordinary sensation amongst the domestics attending on Mr. Cooper, and left on the minds of the Negroes a very unfavourable impression of him.' p. 57.

Mr. Cooper's reply to this, or justification of his conduct, is as follows:

'This boy was put into my service the day I arrived in the island; and at first he gave me every satisfaction. His work was light, and I may safely say, that his situation was not more laborious than that of the majority of gentlemen's servants in this country. I taught him to read, and did every thing in my power to make him comfortable, not doubting that mild treatment would secure, for any length of time, his useful services. But I was completely mistaken; for, after the first six months he began to relax in his duty, and to indicate an indifference to please me. I reasoned with him upon the impropriety of his conduct, and he promised to amend. For a short time he was as good as his word, and then became worse then ever. Again and again I called him to account, hoping that I might by remonstrance restore him to his former state of obedience. I spoke to my neighbours upon the subject; and also to the attorney and overseer of the estate, all of whom seemed to agree, that my measures were not sufficiently decisive, and some of them repeatedly recommended to me to try the whip. This I was extremely reluctant to do, notwithstanding I saw that the other servants, as well as John, were determined to have their own way, and take every possible advantage of us. At last, things got to so bad a state, that I saw the necessity of effecting some alteration. The silver spoons, after every meal, were thrown down in the yard, instead of being put into their places,* and the greatest confusion prevailed through the establishment. Things were wasted, and want was sometimes felt where there ought to have been plenty. Even the horses came in for an ample share of neglect: and, in a word, nothing received its proper

* Washing the spoons is, in Jamaica, the work of the *female* servants.

attention. To dwell in this state, was impossible; especially, as it affected the daily comfort and happiness of my wife. Threatening had been so often tried, that it was found to be productive of mischief rather than good. On one or two occasions, I took a stick and tried whether a few stripes from that would not have a beneficial influence on this lad, and put the other servants somewhat on their guard. I was, however, deceived; for no one paid any serious regard to this, and we began to despair. Many times I saw Mrs. C. insulted, and did myself put up with language from the domestics, which I should not think of submitting to in this country, no, not for an hour. In this state things remained till March 13, 1820, that is, rather more than two years and a quarter after we took up our abode on Mr. Hibbert's estate. On the morning of this day, John was so extremely outrageous, that I felt myself under the necessity of putting him into the overseer's hands, *intending* that he should confine him for a few hours, and then give him ten or twelve lashes. He, however, made both feet fast in the stocks, and kept him in that situation from about one o'clock in the day till the next morning, when he took the poor boy out and gave him a terrible whipping.* I was not present on the occasion, and was never able to ascertain what number of stripes he received. The overseer went far, very far beyond my directions, and John was, in consequence, sadly overpunished. This I always maintained upon the estate, as Mr. Oates, the attorney, well knows. After this, John conducted himself rather better for a short time, but again became refractory. I again remonstrated with him, but to so little effect, that I was

* Mr. C. evidently mentions it as a reproach to the overseer, that (according to custom) he deferred the punishment till next morning. He says, *he intended* the overseer should confine John a few hours, and then give him ten or twelve lashes. —Did he write a note to this effect? or did he in any way express this intention? Petty delinquents are often sent to the stocks under a threat of punishment, and liberated the next morning, after a night's confinement—would it be too much to suppose, that the overseer might expect, or at least think it probable, that the clergyman would before morning relent, and forgive his servant?

It is proper to mention, that I never was in the part of the island where Mr. C. resided, and have no knowledge of any of the parties; nor have I ever seen any of their publications but the pamphlet before us.

obliged to change him. He was sent into the field to work with the gang, in which situation he remained when I left the island.' p. 59.

Now, on this narrative, I beg the reader to remark, that Mr. Cooper's authority extended over only a few domestic servants who have but little labour to perform; and are always selected from the more intelligent and best disposed of the people on the plantation. Yet this man, who raises his voice against the iron system, the odious and despotic principles of the colonists, and the tremendous authority exercised by the overseers over the slaves, in the management of John and a few others found it necessary (after reasoning with them, and threatening till threatening had become productive of mischief rather than good) to take a stick, and try whether a few strokes with it would not have a beneficial influence! But no; remonstrances, threats, the stick itself failed; and Mr. C. handed 'poor' John over to the overseer to try the 'beneficial influence' of the driver's whip. He got a terrible whipping. Of course the minister was not to blame for this. Oh dear no; the overseer, he says, 'deferred the flogging till next morning; and went 'far, very far beyond his directions.' It was all in vain, however; for 'John again became refractory.' Again, Mr. C. remonstrated with him, and ultimately sent him to the field to work before the driver. Such was the conduct, as told by himself, of this Unitarian clergyman, who, on his return to England, came forward as the accuser of the whole white population of Jamaica. I do not say, nor suppose, that

John did not deserve punishment, though what his offence was, further than that he was 'outrageous,' it is impossible to ascertain from the above artful narrative, in which the faults and misconduct of the whole domestics are told, in a manner to make them appear John's faults, or at least to justify the punishment inflicted on him. He was the *only* slave, Mr. Cooper tells us, ever punished with the whip by his orders: on how many he tried the 'beneficial influence of the stick,' is not mentioned.

In the country parts of Jamaica, throwing down or leaving the silver spoons, where they are usually taken to be washed, on the grass-plot before the door of the dwelling-house, is a very common piece of carelessness, a thing which I have seen a hundred times; waste of provisions, or making free with what has been on the master's table (which I presume is what the gentleman calls waste) is also a very common thing, I may say the custom of the country, for the house servants on a plantation consider it all the property of their master, and think it not very unreasonable that they should partake, with the white people, of massa's pigs and poultry, or that their poultry should partake with the white people's horses of massa's corn.* But whatever cause the

* Negroes who have the superintendence of the proprietors', attorneys', or overseers' horses, invariably keep a good stock of poultry, the feeding of which costs them little or nothing. The horses are fed at a trough, fixed in the open yard, generally in front of the dwelling-house, and in tossing about their heads to drive away the flies, they scatter a deal of the large Indian corn among a swarm of poultry, which attends as regularly as the horses. What a stock of poultry you have got! is the usual observation of a stranger to the overseer: he is told that not one of all

Reverend Gentleman had for his severity, and, as I said before, I doubt not but he may have had sufficient cause, it is surely strange that so very much blame should attach to the managers of plantations, who have hundreds of turbulent people to keep at harder duty, because *they* cannot do it without a power of inflicting corporal punishment, when even the Rev. Thomas Cooper, with all his reasoning with them, his remonstrating with them, his calling them to account again and again, and threatening them,—with all the patience and long-suffering for which he, deservedly no doubt, takes credit to himself, could not manage a few domestics without beating them with a stick, and sending them to be flogged.

From the yet rude state of the negroes, more than from the system of slavery, some degree of arbitrary power in punishing them is absolutely necessary, to preserve that order and subordination which is essential to the welfare of all classes; but in the exercise of that power, law and custom have established certain regulations well understood, one of which is, that *a white man must never, with his own hand, inflict punishment on a slave.* Mr. Cooper, I doubt not, may have often seen delinquents whipped in Jamaica; but I doubt much that he ever saw a white man, except himself, beat a slave with a stick, or punish him with his own hand. To do this is considered in the

---

he sees belongs to the estate; that they are all the property of the domestic slaves, and are frequently purchased from them, when the plantation fowl-house cannot supply the table or the sick-house.

highest degree disgraceful; and (as appearing to proceed from passion) is felt even by the slaves as more injurious and more degrading to submit to, than a regular, though severer punishment, by the hand of a slave. Were a book-keeper on any plantation I am acquainted with to try 'the beneficial influence' of a stick on a negro, he would be instantly dismissed. But for a clergyman to beat his servant with a stick, and send him to be flogged by the driver! No wonder, as he himself says, the other servants were *surprised;* no wonder, as Mr. Oates says, such conduct 'created an extraordinary sensation, 'and left on the minds of the negroes a very unfa-'vourable impression of him.'

One would wish to believe that this must be a singular case, but unfortunately we have another of even more recent date, and given upon the most undoubted authority, that of the Rev. Mr. Bickell, who tells it of himself, anticipating, no doubt, that some one else, as in the case of Mr. Cooper, would tell it for him.

'I had once occasion,' says that Reverend Gentleman, 'to send a stout servant boy, or hired slave of my own, to the workhouse for punishment (on account of stealing from a shopkeeper, who complained to me), and I desired he might be given *only* two dozen. Though he richly deserved the flogging, yet I was sorry to see him when he returned, for he crept and rolled about the yard for some time, crying aloud, and was so much marked, that he could scarcely sit or walk for several days. Being a mischievous lad, and inclined to theft, he deserved punishment several times afterwards, but I never sent him again, as I thought I had better give him a moderate punishment *with my own hand.*'—*West Indies as they are.* p. 26.

What a humiliating sight it must have been to see holy men—men filling the sacred office, thus employed, foaming with passion, and belabouring poor creatures who were crying out to them for mercy! Yet these, and such as these, are the persons who alone are deemed worthy of credit in describing the West India colonies; and why? because their testimony falls in with popular prejudices, by pampering and ministering to which they strive to gain favour; while the favourable testimony of the Wesleyan missionaries, long resident in Jamaica, is contradicted by their committee at home;—the statements of a respectable Rector, Mr. Bridges, are termed 'a foul libel' on the person whose errors he attempted to point out and correct,*—and the report of the Bishop of Jamaica is laughed at and ridiculed within the walls of Parliament, because it is at variance with the report of Mr. Bickell, and of men who, cast out of the pale of society in Jamaica, apply the soothing unction to their souls that not their misdeeds, but the ill-treatment of the colonists, had occasioned the disappointment of their hopes, and return to England ready and willing to retaliate by any means,—aware that

> The world is naturally averse
> To all the truth it sees or hears;
> But swallows nonsense and a lie
> With greediness and gluttony.

* Mr. Bridges published a few strictures on Mr. Wilberforce's Appeal, whereby, according to the Edinburgh Reviewers, he was guilty of 'a foul libel' on the character of that gentleman! How many such foul libels have the Reviewers been guilty of?

But to return to Mr. Cooper. In reply to an assertion of his, that the slaves on Georgia estate, where he resided, had to work the half of each night during crop-time, which usually lasts four or five months, Mr. Oates, the manager, on his oath, declares,

'That on Georgia estate the negroes are, and always have been, since he knew the property, divided into four spells, and not into two, as stated by Mr. Cooper, and each negro keeps spell only six hours in each alternate night, making the night labour of each negro in a week amount to eighteen hours, and not to three nights in the week, as stated in the pamphlet.' p. 36.

On this Mr. Cooper observes:

'Unless a studied system of falsehood was practised upon me, the slaves employed in the night time were not divided into four spells when I was on the estate. I was assured, at least a hundred times, by the negroes themselves and the different *white* people on the estate, as well as by many of the neighbours engaged in the planting business, that the night-work was done by *two gangs* or *spells*, and I never heard four mentioned till I read Mr. Oates's assertion. I have often seen the lists of the two gangs on Georgia hung up in the boiling house: I have examined them with a book-keeper, who assured me that they contained all the negroes who were expected to take spell, which I could not doubt, from the number of names the lists contained. One spell was called *John Crow Spell*, and the other *Quality Spell*. In addition to this, I have, times without number, heard both negroes and book-keepers complain bitterly of being kept up at their spell the *whole* of every other night.' p. 37.

Perhaps this will appear as convincing an answer as any Mr. C. has given to the affidavits of his opponents; yet I have no doubt that what Mr. Oates says is correct, and that Mr. Cooper may have been deceived, without any 'studied system of falsehood

being practised upon him;' or even any intention existing any where to deceive him. On Holland estate, where I resided, and kept spell myself, and on other properties with which I am acquainted, the negroes are divided in the same manner into two gangs or spells, one of which goes on duty each night; the lists are hung up in the boiling-house in the manner Mr. C. states them to have been hung up at Georgia, and, as he says, they are commonly spoken of as the two spells: but each of these two spells is again subdivided into two parts, one of which takes the first half of the night, and t ` other the second, by which means each negro has only half the amount of night labour Mr. Cooper asserts, that is, eighteen hours in a week instead of three nights.

The lists of the two spells, hung up in the boiling house, are arranged by the overseer or manager, and are each put under charge of a responsible negro, who, along with a book-keeper, regulates the subdivision according to circumstances: thus, if several people on the one should be unable to attend from sickness, a few would be taken out of the other to equalize them.

With writers who, like Mr. C., labour to prove the oppression of the negroes, spell-keeping is a favourite theme, and is represented as occupying not a part but the whole of the negroes, nearly as much as their labour by day. But the fact is, that upon an estate with 200 labourers, about 18 only are required at night to attend the mill and boiling-

house; and so in proportion for larger properties.* It would certainly be well if even these could be dispensed with; but in a country like England, where one sees the illumined manufactories occupying through the night so large a part of the population, and even of those in the tender years of youth as well as of manhood, it is rather strange that the benevolent should yet go so far, for a similar evil to mourn over, and dwell so exclusively on the cruel hardship of spell-keeping in the sugar colonies. Has the negro manufacturer, returning to his house at midnight, when relieved from his half night's task in the mild climate of Jamaica, the same sacrifice of comfort, the same hardship or risk of injury to his health, as the manufacturer in England, leaving a heated atmosphere and going out into the cold of a winter night? Yet, among those whose compassion is so much alive to the night-work and other sufferings of the negro, that they cannot partake of the product of his industry, who ever thinks of the sleepless nights—the tender hands—the sallow and emaciated frame of the poor boys and girls,

* There will be in the mill—
3 men or women carrying in the canes.
2 men feeding the mill.
4 women carrying away in baskets the ground canes.
In the boiling-house—
1 Man attending the clarifiers.
3 men attending the boilers.
1 man making fire.
3 women with baskets, carrying the dried ground canes, called trash, for fuel.
1 man, officer of the spell.

—
18

from whose labour they are furnished with all the most common articles of their clothing, and

> 'To whom the goodly earth and air
> Are bann'd and barr'd, forbidden fare.'

It may further be remarked, with respect to spell-keeping, that, although the crop season lasts about five months, it is not constant for that length of time; intermissions of a week being occasionally required on all the estates to put in the cane plants, which must be done while the canes are cutting, as the top of the old cane constitutes the new plant.

Regarding the time allowed the negroes to cultivate their provision grounds, the Manager of Georgia swears,

'That the negroes on Georgia, during Mr. Cooper's residence there, had from 28 to 30 week days in the year, besides Thursday afternoons, and such week days were even more than amply sufficient for the purpose of cultivating and attending to their grounds, without the slightest encroachment on the Sunday, out of crop; and the season when such days were allowed to them, is the proper season for planting all their provisions, and not during the crop time; so that, in fact, in crop they have scarcely any thing more to do than to dig up or cut their week's provisions on Sunday.' p. 85.

On this Mr. Cooper says, 'It is possible they 'might have had 28 days allowed them, but cer-'tainly never more while I was on the estate.' p. 84.

This acknowledgement from such a quarter is particularly worthy of the attention of Mr. Stephen and the writers of the Edinburgh Review, who, as I formerly noticed, unblushingly assert, that the negroes must work at their provision grounds on Sun-

day, '*no other time being allowed them for that purpose.*' Mr. Stephen tells us, that in the West Indies the labour of a week is sufficient to furnish subsistence for a year; and Mr. Cooper says, the negroes on Georgia, while he resided there, were allowed twenty-eight work-days to cultivate their grounds, exclusive of Thursday afternoons, and the holidays at Christmas and Easter. Yet the Rev. Gentleman (to counteract the effect of his own evidence, as it would seem) quotes Stewart's View of Jamaica to prove that the slaves must work on Sunday or starve. p. 47.

But Mr. Cooper is not a witness only against the colonists, he is an advocate also, and it would be unfair not to give a specimen of his talents as such.

'Twenty-six days for the whole year, which is the number allowed by the law, averages to each negro half a day for each of the fifty-two weeks that compose the year. And here we have oath upon oath, for Mr. Oates and Mr. M'Kenzie both in effect swear to it, that this half day in the week is "amply sufficient" for the cultivation of the negro's provision grounds, from which he and his children derive their support, with the exception of a few herrings, 'without any encroachment on the Sunday:' and Mr. Oates swears also, 'that it is *entirely* optional with the negro how he will spend the Sunday;' thus making his half-day in the week completely competent to every purpose, of washing and mending his clothes, cleaning his hut, attending the market, and taking care of the 'large supplies of hogs, 'goats, and poultry;' which Mr. Oates makes oath are the property of the slave. For let it be remembered, that during the five days and a half in the week in which the man is toiling for the master, the wife and children are not at home, engaged in their own domestic affairs, as is frequently the case in this country; every one capable of useful exertion is abroad, performing the labour of the estate. Now, if it be true that this half-day in the week is thus important to the slave, of what immense value must be those other eleven half-

days which are taken from him, and appropriated to his owner! And how extensive the robbery committed by the latter on the unfortunate victim of servitude! For if one day be thus adequate to the effecting of every thing essential to the support and comfort of one individual, who does not perceive that the return from his labour during the other eleven half-days in the week, must be equal to all the wants of eleven other individuals, and that the produce of his exertions must be sufficient for the subsistence of twelve persons, namely, himself and eleven others? And allow that, out of the 384 slaves resident on Georgia, even 200 are capable of labour, and we shall find that the returns from their exertions must be equal to the support of 2400 people, including themselves; and this, too, without reckoning their night work, which, as sworn to by Mr. Hibbert's agents, is equal to thirty days, or sixty half-days more; and the produce of the labour of 200 people for these thirty days, or sixty half days, must, according to the statements on oath, be equal to the subsistence and comfort of about 240 persons, which, added to the above 2400, amount to 2640; and thus the estate of Georgia, if there be any truth in the oaths of Mr. Hibbert's agents, would make from the labour of the slaves upon it, a yearly return of produce equal to the subsistence of 2646 persons, including themselves. And yet, with these immense profits from the sinews of their slaves, do the West Indians still go to Parliament, and petition for relief from their distresses!' p. 86.

'Washing or mending his clothes,' on the day allowed him to cultivate his grounds, is a thing which a negro never thinks of doing, as he has two hours every day, from twelve to two o'clock, a part of which he may devote to this purpose; besides that, his wife, if she happens to be pregnant, or nursing, does little else any day but attend to her family or household concerns. And in almost every family there are some old people, who, although not able nor required to work for the master, may yet be useful in looking after and taking care of the hogs and poultry,

and attending to other little concerns of the family, such as bringing in firewood, water, &c. If ever Mr. Cooper went through the plantation village on Georgia estate, or any other, while the working people were on duty, it is impossible but he must have seen what a large proportion of the negroes are constantly, in one way or other, exempted from labour, and either do nothing or are engaged in attending to the domestic concerns of their families, washing and mending, looking after the small stock, &c. Thus a man in the prime of life will be engaged cutting canes, some of his older children weeding in another field, his wife at home nursing a young infant, his mother at home with her, and his father occupying a temporary hut as a watchman in the provision grounds, raising poultry, perhaps, or doing just what work is agreeable to him for the benefit of his family.—Mr. Cooper himself supposes, that out of the 384 slaves in Georgia, 200 only will be at work, and even this is a larger proportion than I have ever known.*

* During the late harvest I had an opportunity of seeing several fields of corn cut down in the neighbourhood of a county town (Elgin) in the north of Scotland, and I was particularly struck with the number of grey-headed and infirm old men and women I saw at work, who, in Jamaica, would have been long exempted from labour, and supported as pensioners by the landlords. I was informed by themselves that they breakfasted before they left their homes in the morning, that they walked a distance of three miles to the field, that they were regularly at work, if the weather was favourable, between seven and eight in the morning, and continued with little intermission (resting only about a quarter of an hour in the forenoon, as long in the middle of the afternoon, and half an hour at dinner) till after six in the evening, when they again walked the same distance home. Among them were several women big with child, and mothers with infants at the breast, which, while at work, they gave in charge to their other children of five or six years old, who were taken out to

But to proceed. Mr. M'Kenzie swears, 'that the negroes on Georgia, during Mr. Cooper's residence there, had from 28 to 30 week days in the year, besides Thursday afternoons; and that such week days were even more than amply sufficient *for the purpose of cultivating and attending to their grounds.*' And

---

the field for that purpose. I learned that for dinner some of them had a kind of oatmeal (or oat and rye meal) cake, with a bottle of skimmed milk or small beer; some a dry cake and water, and some only a little oatmeal which they mixed with water in a bottle, and used as meat and drink in the field, to support ten or twelve hours of hard labour! Their earnings, I understood, averaged about 1s. 3d. a day (although some few in a good field would make from 2s. to 2s. 6d.), out of which they had to pay house rent, and provide themselves with food, clothes, &c,: and I was told this was great wages, to be got only during a few weeks in harvest.—Many days they had not worked two hours, when, it happening to rain, they were sent home, and the day was thus in a great measure lost to them.

What a fine story this would have made, imported from the West Indies!—Though applying to a few only of the labourers in Scotland, as a matter of course the representation would have been made general. 'The poor negroes,' it would have been said, 'are doomed to incessant labour in the field for ten or twelve hours 'out of the twenty-four. Many of them have to walk several miles to their work 'in the morning, and the same distance home at night. The hoary head is not ex-'empted from labour, nor the mother nursing a young infant, nor even the woman 'who is within a few weeks of her confinement; male and female, young and feeble '(including even children of seven and eight years old), are seen toiling together. 'And what is their support?—a little oatmeal and water!'

The common hire paid to women in that part of Scotland, for half a year's service is 40s. and when hired by the day 8d. (without victuals) for working ten hours a day, hoeing turnips and potatoes, making hay, spreading dung, or other field work. How they can feed and clothe themselves with such wages, may well excite wonder; and yet I was well assured that, there being no large manufactories near, they could scarcely make more than half as much by any kind of work within doors.

Mr. Brougham, it is said, has announced his intention to bring a bill into Parliament to save the females in the colonies the hardship of being employed 'in the field.' No doubt he intends the same kindness to his own countrywomen; for we cannot think that the learned gentleman has less regard for them; nor can we imagine any good reason why the black women should all be made ladies, while so many of our white kinswomen must earn their bread by field labour, hoeing turnips, spreading dung, &c.

Mr. Oates' words are, 'that the week days allowed to the negroes during the year, upon Georgia estate, are amply sufficient *for the cultivation of their provision grounds.*' Mr. Cooper, in the paragraph above quoted, considers this as equivalent to their having sworn that one half-day in the week is '*adequate to* '*the effecting of every thing essential to the support and* '*comfort of one individual.*' One would have thought it was enough for the Reverend Gentleman to endeavour to destroy the credibility of his opponents by publishing in his pamphlet, that they had been guilty of fornication, without putting words in their mouths which they never made use of. But having represented them as swearing that the half-day in the week is 'adequate to the effecting of every thing 'essential to the support and comfort of one indivi-'dual,' he goes on to say, 'who then does not per-'ceive that the return from his labour during the 'other eleven half-days in the week, must be equal 'to *all the wants* of eleven other individuals, &c., and 'that the estate of Georgia, *if there be any truth in* '*the oaths of Mr. Hibbert's agents,* would make from 'the labour of the slaves upon it, a yearly return of 'produce equal to the subsistence of 2640 persons. 'And yet,' adds he, 'with this immense profit from 'the sinews of their slaves, do the West Indians still 'go to Parliament and petition for relief from their 'distresses!'

Mr. Cooper's answers to the statements on oath of Mr. M'Kenzie and Mr. Oates are frequently such as these: '*This is a gross and wilful misrepresentation,*—

'*a tissue of deliberate falsehoods; they have sworn to* '*what they knew to be false,*' &c. Far be it from me to apply such irreverent terms to the evidence of a clergyman 'living,' as he says, 'under the influence of the fear of God.' I shall content myself with asking, whether the words used by those gentlemen 'that the week days allowed to the negroes to culti-'vate and attend to their grounds, were amply suffi-'cient for that purpose,' can be considered as imply-'ing that they are 'adequate to *the effecting of every* '*thing* essential to their support and comfort'?—whether there is no clothing or other articles given them? no hospital, medicines, and medical attendance for them in sickness?—if the land and houses they occupy be nothing?—if there is no expence incurred in supporting the aged and infirm?—if the master requires no interest for his capital?—And whether these form no deduction from '*the immense profit*' of the eleven half-days which are 'taken from' the slave and appropriated to his master?

It would not be one whit more ridiculous to say, that every shilling a manufacturer or farmer in England receives, over what he pays to his labourers for wages, is clear profit, wrung from their sinews. The labour of ten men, on some farms in England, would raise food for two or three hundred persons: what an immense profit the farmer must have! How ridiculous it ever was to speak of agricultural distress! How extensive the robbery committed on the hinds, the unfortunate victims of servitude!

Let us hear the Rev. Mr. Bickell on the same subject:

'The hire of slaves, when employed about general plantation labour, is half a dollar a day, for each man or woman; but jobbing slaves, when engaged in digging cane-holes, would heretofore earn their masters frequently 5s. or even a dollar per diem; and in making roads, 3s. 6d. or 4s. currency. The labour of the slaves generally on sugar estates or coffee mountains, could not however be rated so high, and therefore might fairly be put down at 2s. 6d. currency per diem, or 15s. per week throughout the year.' p. 243.

'—According to this calculation, and I think it is a pretty fair one, the master would be indebted to each able slave about £30 at the end of the year; but as sugars sell low, I would put the price of labour at the lowest value, and that is 1s. 8d. currency, or 1s. 1d. sterling per diem; this would make per annum £26, and leave the slave creditor about £20 at the year's end; and this is the common hire of slaves employed on plantations, in a body, by the year.' p. 245.

To those who know any thing of the colonies, it can scarcely be matter of surprise, that the Reverend Author should consider it necessary to assure his readers, in the next paragraph, that he is telling the truth, or, in other words, that 'this is no exaggerated view of the case at all.'

It is no exaggeration at all, while little more than one-third of the negroes can earn £20 per annum, and the labour of the efficient, in the prime of life, must support the sick, the aged, and the children, to set down £20 as 'the common hire for slaves employed on plantations, *in a body*, by the year.'* Nor is it any exaggeration, while the rate of labour on

* With the advocates of emancipation Mr. Bickell is held excellent authority on all points regarding the colonies;—let them therefore recollect, that, *according to his statement*, the slaves in Jamaica alone, in number about 320,000, earn for their

the public roads is, by law, 2s. 6d. per day, to state it at 4s.

To exemplify his argument, however, the Reverend Gentleman proceeds to give a minute and mercantile statement of the expence of settling a coffee plantation; by which it appears, that 50 negroes (including, of course, the usual proportion of children and old people, for they can only be bought in families), besides erecting houses, clearing ground, and planting provisions for themselves, as they necessarily must, will in three years clear 50 acres of woodland for their master, plant it with coffee, and keep it clean! That on the third year it will produce 10 tierces of coffee, on the fourth 25, on the fifth 40, on the sixth 60, and on the seventh the proprietor has money in hand, all debts discharged, £3000, and may soon 'drive four-in-hand as well as any Jehu in England.' Who would not be a coffee-planter, with such a glorious prospect before him? No mortality among his people—no bad seasons to destroy the lovely blossoms—no failure of soil—and, to crown all, 140s. the cwt. for coffee, unfortunately, at present, not netting on an average much above 60s.

I now proceed to give a few specimens of the manner in which Mr. Bickell, who 'hopes to stand

---

masters £6,400,000 per annum; and Mr. Bickell has the honesty to acknowledge, that, 'those possessed of them have an undoubted right to be remunerated by some 'means or other, before the negroes can be emancipated.'

'well in the opinion of all humane persons,' (p. 6.) speaks of the white people in Jamaica.

Of the Assembly he says, 'the great planting attorneys, and attorneys-at-law, make nearly one-'half of it; and they, to secure their immense profits, 'will strain every nerve to keep things in their pre-'sent state, caring but little for the owners of pro-'perties, or for the negroes, and looking only through 'heavy charges to the making of fortunes.' p. 145.

The Governor's Secretary (alas! why did he not procure a rectorship for the worthy Mr. Bickell?) 'takes nearly as much power upon himself as the 'Governor himself.' p. 97. Again, the same gentleman 'interferes with sacred things in a very unbe-'coming and wicked way.' p. 219. Again, 'this 'modest and moral scribe would most likely have 'taken upon himself to dictate to his Majesty's Ec-'clesiastical Commissioners.' p. 220. And, again, speaking of this wicked scribe, whose name is *William Bullock*, the Reverend Gentleman has the following brilliant witticism, which, it will be admitted, smacks of 'the University of Cambridge,' of which Mr. Bickell takes care to inform his readers, in his title page, that he has the honour to be a member:

'Livy, the great Roman historian, tells us, that—*Bos loquitur in foro.* But I trust we shall hear no more of—Bos profanus, magna loquens in Ecclesiâ Anglicanâ;—Deus avertat!' p. 221.

History also informs us, and on better authority than that of 'Livy, the great Roman historian,' that a certain long-eared animal once spoke; but, 'I trust,' no reader of Mr Bickell's book will find cause

to suspect that there is still a 'Bos,' or a Balaam's ass, speaking in the church — 'Deus avertat!'

Of the curates he says — 'several Creole gentlemen, on half-pay, and clerks, not too well qualified, 'have obtained ordination.' p. 97. 'They have done 'little duty, and less good.' p. 99.

'Most of the colonists,' says he, 'know not the 'importance of true and vital religion, but are in 'gross darkness.' p. 103. What a pity, then, that Mr. Bickell should have left them in such a state of gross darkness, and to such curates. Instead of coming home to rail at them, ought not he to have remained to illumine their gross darkness by his shining light?

'Most of the overseers,' says he, 'are too fond 'of flogging, and feel no more for the cries of a 'negro than for the howling of a dog.' p. 14. But it is not very clear what opinion the Reverend Gentleman entertains of this important class, for he afterwards says, 'There are many respectable men 'among the overseers,' p. 107; 'and certainly there 'are many humane men among the overseers.' p. 53. I leave the reader to decide between these statements: and he must also determine for himself, from the following paragraphs, whether the fault lies with the overseers, or with the Creole white women, that there is not marriage between them.

'I do not say that there is a general wish among 'the overseers themselves to enter the married 'state; for, unfortunately, though most of them 'arrived in the colonies without a shilling in their

'pockets; nay, more, numbers have been imported '(particularly from Scotland) in a demi-kind of sla-'very, their passage out being paid by instalments 'by the managers who hire them, in two or three 'years after their arrival; yet such is their infatua-'tion and pride, that they look forward, most of 'them, to making fortunes and to becoming great 'men, and would not marry if they could, to live 'decently and religiously.' p. 107.

This is the charge against the overseers; but the following paragraph shifts the blame from them, and shews that they cannot marry if they would, 'to 'live decently and religiously;' for, notwithstanding their lofty pride and high expectations, 'overseers,' says he, 'are hardly looked upon as gentlemen (ex-'cept one here and there, who may be a proprietor), 'however respectable his friends in the mother coun-'try may be: if inclined, and allowed to marry, he 'would find some difficulty, in the present state of 'things, to procure for himself a wife; for so great 'is the pride of the Creole white women (who are 'all ladies of course), that even a small proprietor's, 'or a petty shopkeeper's daughter, would look with 'disdain upon an overseer, and wonder at his pre-'sumption in aspiring to the honour of her hand in 'marriage.' p. 110.

In another place he informs his readers, that 'the 'fair ones in Jamaica know no other love but the 'love of money, and when that comes, no matter 'how the hero got it.' p. 105. But if these 'fair 'ones' were more disposed for matrimony, what

would it avail the 'infatuated overseers?' for we are told, as a third reason why they do not marry, that 'in nineteen cases out of twenty a loss of their si-'tuation would immediately follow; so great, so 'universal an objection is there with the great attor-'neys and the few resident proprietors to the mar-'riage of overseers.' p. 106.

Moreover, there is a fourth, and a more rational cause assigned, why the overseers will not marry if they could, and why they cannot easily get wives, 'if they would: they have no security in their situations: 'an owner or attorney may dismiss them at 'a day's notice, and they frequently are dismissed 'for no fault at all.' p. 107. Whether the proprietors may be induced, at the suggestion of Mr. Bickell, to give the overseers a lease of the management of their estates and slaves, to enable them to marry, I do not know; but certainly it would bespeak little prudence, to say the least, in a white Creole or English lady to put herself in the way of having a family whose subsistence, and her own, should depend upon a tenure of this kind—uncertain every morning if her husband should have a home at night to shelter them—uncertain, more than in other countries, of life itself, in a climate fatal to Europeans, and far distant from the friends and relatives who would sympathise with and protect their offspring, if left destitute. This circumstance, more than 'the pride of the Creole white women,' or 'the infatuation and pride of the overseers,' will explain why marriage has not been, and scarcely ever

can be, general among English emigrants earning their daily bread as dependent servants on the plantations.

'The planters,' complains Mr. Stephen, 'send 'out and employ as managers, overseers, and book-'keepers, single men in the heat of youth.'—*Slavery of the British West India Colonies*, p. 124.

How easy it is to discover evils in the world; how difficult it often is to remedy them! Can the planters find married men to go out to the West Indies with their families, as book-keepers, and overseers, when the heat and ardour of youth is over? Or can they be reasonably required, *from apprehension of immoral practices*, to give all their servants the means of marrying and supporting families? Do the masters in England, where living is less expensive, act thus to their servants?

Describing the condition of the working class in the colonies, Mr. Bickell says,

'Nor will a trifling excuse serve the black females either (if too late at work in the morning); they must not pretend, like the fair dames of Europe, to have the vapours; nor if, like too many British ladies, they have spent a great part of the night in seeking for pleasure, when they had much better have been at home, must they hope to indulge in an extra portion of nature's restoring balm, sweet sleep, till the sun has run far his daily course, and their watchful maidens warn them from their couch! No, at the unwelcome sounds, Afric's dusky daughter must start from her gloomy abode; no children crying for food can detain her (though on some properties women having young children do not go to work before breakfast); no time allowed for platting the hair or washing the skin; but

with her hoe in one hand, and an infant in the other, or often tied up in a cloth behind her, she makes the best of her way to take her place, her unequal share of the task, by the strong-armed and stout-made man, in the well dressed-up rank of the gang." p. 48.

It is not very common, we suppose, for even British ladies who have infants to take charge of in the morning, to spend a great part of the night '*in seek-*'*ing for pleasure.*' But, however this may be, it cannot be denied that 'Afric's dusky daughter,' if absent from duty, would not be excused either for 'pretending to have had the vapours,' or for 'having 'spent a great part of the night in seeking for plea-'sure.' Nor would it avail her, if after a night so spent, she indulged too long in 'nature's restoring 'balm, sweet sleep,' to say, she had been detained 'platting her woolly hair.' These excuses are probably quite sufficient for servants in England, but never were heard of in Jamaica, unless perhaps by Mr. Bickell, who has been 'credibly informed,' or has 'heard of' so many strange things there.

As to 'Afric's dusky daughter' leading or carrying her infant to the field, this he may have seen; it is customary enough for mothers who have infants upwards of two months old to carry them out, and one half of them takes charge of the children while the other is at work. But as to their working with their children tied up in a cloth on their backs, as Mr. Bickell's words seem to imply, this, it is surely unnecessary to say, never was seen by him or any one else. He acknowledges that 'on *some* properties women having young 'children do not go to

work before breakfast.'—What, if women having young children (under two or three months), do not go the field at all, and do nothing else but attend to them?—What if women nursing children of any age do not in any case go to work till they have had breakfast, or at least till two hours after the other people?—What, if they have an extra hour or half-hour for dinner, and are allowed to go home an hour before the others at night? And what, if during the short time they are out in the field, instead of 'taking their unequal share of the task by the strong-armed and stout-made man in the well dressed-up 'rank of the gang,' they have but one person's work allotted to two of them, the one half of them sitting down nursing and attending to the children while the other is at work?—What, if such should be the the truth, are we to think of the Reverend Gentleman's assurance that *he* writes with candour, and wishes to give a real and unprejudiced picture of the state of slavery in Jamaica?—And that such is the truth, I not only affirm, but I defy him to name a single plantation in Jamaica where he ever saw the *pickeninny mummas* (as they are called) turn out to work with the other people in the mornings.

The fact is, from the time a negro woman becomes pregnant until the time she weans her child, all the work she does amounts to very little; and the object of requiring them to appear in the field is rather to keep them out of harm's way than any thing else.

Of the clothing and food of the negroes, and the

state of religion among them, Mr. Bickell speaks at great length.

'The most common clothing,' says he, 'for men and women, is *coarse* blue blaize, and *coarse* Osnaburghs, with *coarse* hats and woollen caps. Of the baize, enough is given the men for a surtout, and to the women for a petticoat; of the Osnaburgh, enough for two shirts and two pair of trowsers to the men, and for two shifts and a petticoat or two to the women: they generally make them up themselves: they have also a man's hat each, of very inferior quality, with one or two woollen caps. This is generally served out once a year." p. 54.

Again: "But what has the slave? He has for his best (from his master, as I before observed,) a large baize surtout, which hangs about him like a sack, and would as well fit any person you please as himself; and moreover a pair of *coarse* trowsers, and *coarse* shirt of Osnaburgh, which, with the *coarsest* kind of hat, is his whole wardrobe: for this is the general livery or badge of slavery. The female slaves are clothed as much inferior to our poor women, and both negro men and negro women are without stockings and shoes, and generally go in a half-dressed state, viz. without coats or gowns, the womens' petticoats up to their knees; and very often before fresh supplies are given out, many of them are in a very ragged state, and some almost in a state of nudity." p. 58.

Mr. Bickell, I presume, had not 'heard', or 'been 'informed,' that in addition to the articles he enumerates, it is common, at least on many plantations, to give the negroes an allowance of linen check, and on all, a cotton handkerchief to each slave, with thread, needles, &c. How a woman receiving so large an allowance as he states, of coarse strong clothing (three suits yearly) can yet, before fresh supplies be given out, be in a state of nudity, I am at a loss to conjecture; as also why a negro, as he makes up his own clothes, should make his surtout

'to hang about him like a sack.'* But the greatest hardship of all is, that the negroes working under a vertical sun, should 'go in a half-dressed state, without coats and gowns, or shoes and stockings!'

'Negroes,' says he in another place, 'are generally fond of dress, and in the towns many of them, particularly the free negroes, are respectably clad. It is rather singular that most of the men dress in black, and the women in white, when they can afford it; and it is gratifying to see a congregation of them make so respectable an appearance. Some of the slaves in the country parishes, also, where they are near to a market, dress decently and even respectably at their own expence.' p. 56.

But then: 'The slave has not a decent fustian coat of any colour he pleases, with other parts of his dress suitable,—good and *warm* stockings and shoes.' p. 57. 'Nor has he the *warm bed* with decent furniture, and *the snug chimney corner of the English peasant*'—comforts so needful in the torrid zone.

Concerning the food of the negroes, Mr. Bickell thus expresses himself:

'None but a bigoted and low-minded planter, or some interested professional resident, who cannot return to reside in this

* As these pages may fall into the hands of individuals who are proprietors of slaves, and desirous to attend to their comfort, I may observe here, that there is a very general error in sending out to the negroes too large a quantity of baize and Osnaburgh. Every manager knows that a great deal of these articles is sold by the negroes at one-half what it cost their masters, and the price laid out on linen check and printed cottons: why not send these at first, and save the money to the negroes? There would be no additional expense to the master. A similar remark may be made with regard to the fish sent out to the negroes; it is true they are partial to herrings, but like other people they are fond of a change, and purchase for themselves cod-fish, mackarel, &c. These are brought in abundance from the provinces in North America, and as they may often be bought cheaper than herrings sent from this country, it would be no additional expence to the proprietors to give them occasionally to their negroes in lieu of herrings, particularly in the end of the season before the new herrings arrive. At all events, a supply of herrings for six months, is all that should be sent out at one time.

country, would compare the *coarse* yams and cocoas, and the stringy indigestible plaintains, with a few bad or rotten herrings, to the wholesome bread of this country, and to potatoes and other fine vegetables, with a small portion of fresh meat or bacon, which the English cottager enjoys. I have seen a good deal of the state of the English poor, having served curacies in Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, and Wiltshire, besides having an intimate acquaintance with Devonshire; and I can conscientiously say, that I never saw any one, even a pauper, who lived in the mean *hoggish* way that the slaves in the West Indies do; and, moreover, that if such *coarse* food as the negroes generally eat, were offered them, they would reject it (at least much dislike it); as thinking it hardly fit for human *and rational* beings: English stomachs could not well digest it, three times a day; I know mine could not, and I assert with much truth, that the *coarsest* Irish potatoes, with a little milk, or butter-milk, and salt, are preferable to the negro yams and green plantains; at least, I would sooner have them, and I think most of the British poor would approve of my taste, had they an opportunity of judging.' p. 56.

Mr. Bickell's stomach might digest the coarsest Irish potatoes with a little buttermilk and salt, three times a day, but I suspect a negro's could not, 'at 'least he would much dislike it,' perhaps 'think it hardly fit for human and rational beings,' and would greatly prefer his own good substantial dish of *foofoo*, composed of edoes, ochras, and mashed plaintains, made savoury with rich crabs, and pungent with Cayenne pepper; and I think most of the British poor would soon learn to approve of the negro's taste, had they an opportunity. Pepper-pot, a common and favourite dish with the white people, is in fact the same thing, only substituting flour-dough for mashed plantains. The ochra is a very fine mucilaginous vegetable, which there is nothing to equal

in England. It is cultivated in every negro garden; and the calaloo, or wild spinage, a delicious plant, grows as a weed in the cane fields. The Crongoe yam, which roasted would bear comparison with the best Irish potatoes, grows wild in the fields that have been thrown out of cultivation. From November till April, these are the principal dependence of such indolent improvident creatures as will do nothing for themselves. Fruits and vegetables, of one kind or other, are abundant at all seasons. Yet, amidst these bounties of nature, or, as Mr. Stephen expresses it, the exuberant productiveness of a tropical soil and climate, Mr. Bickell would have it believed there are only *coarse* vegetables, and that those of Jamaica are not to be spoken of with the fine vegetables of our northern climate! We have our advantages certainly, but they are rather, perhaps, that nature having done somewhat less, man from necessity has done more, and has thus acquired habits of industry, and a more expanded mind.

As to the 'small portion of fresh meat and bacon' which Mr. Bickell tells us the English cottager enjoys, he has at least no advantage in this respect over the labourer or cottager in the colonies, for the more industrious negroes have such abundance of pigs and poultry, that they alone supply all the markets of the island with them (this kind of stock never being raised for sale by the proprietors of plantations); and if they do not use much fresh meat, it is because they prefer salted pork, cod-fish, &c. and sell their pigs and poultry to purchase these.

Nor is this taste peculiar to the negroes, for whatever may be the cause, it is certain a larger proportion of salted meat and fish, more especially of the latter, is used through choice by every class in the West India islands than in Europe.

To return to Mr. Bickell: it is gratifying to find, on such authority, that if the vegetables of Jamaica are *coarse,* the negroes have at least plenty of them:

'On the other hand,' says he, 'they are not so badly off as to food as many people in this country imagine; for as I have before remarked, the quantity is sufficient.' p. 58. 'At Christmas, on most estates, they have an extra allowance of salt cod-fish; it generally goes with them under the name of salt, and they take a small portion of it at most of their meals, and put in the pot to boil with their vegetables. It is a savoury meal, not very rich or expensive, to be sure; but it is to them a wholesome kind of food.' p. 10.

That the negroes have even 'a sufficient quantity of 'savoury food, although 'not very rich or expensive,' will, we should hope, be glad news to Mr. Stephen, who has mourned so long over their starvation, hunger, and inanition: and surely he will not doubt the testimony of the Rev. Mr. Bickell, a man according to his own heart in calumniating the colonists,—a man whose zeal in the good cause has even led him to be the propagator, if not the inventor, of low personal slander, not only of men, but women also—describing them so that they may be known, but without giving their names! Of these stories I shall only say, that, judging from the few cases where I have any knowledge of the individuals, I have not the shadow of doubt that the whole are unfounded, and even if

it were otherwise how unworthy of a man holding the rank of a clergyman, to give himself up to the low and despicable employment of collecting and publishing such scandalous anecdotes of private life.

To exemplify the disgrace attached to a marriage between a white person and a woman of colour, the Reverend Gentleman informs us, that,

'In the parish of St. Thomas in the East, a few years ago, a respectable man (to the best of my knowledge he was collecting constable, an office of trust and profit) married a woman of colour, as privately as possible (by licence,) for he and the Rector (the late Rector, Mr. West) well knew the deep-rooted prejudices of the whites in the island. By some means or other it got wind, and came to the ears of some of the vestrymen, when the Rector was asked if it were true; he, however, not choosing to satisfy them, the parish register was demanded of him by the magistrates and vestry, but he refused to shew it them, as wishing to preserve his friend from injury, for doing so praiseworthy a thing as preferring to marry the woman of his affections, rather than live in open and barefaced fornication. At last, however, the churchwardens obtained a sight of the register, and when it was ascertained that the marriage had taken place, he was not only shunned by his former friends and acquaintance, but was soon deprived of his situation, and was nearly ruined. The worthy Rector also (for he was a very good man) incurred a good deal of odium, and they thwarted and injured him in all that they could, because he had so properly, morally, and religiously discharged his duty to God and his fellow-man.' p. 226.

It is rather extraordinary that Mr. Bickell, relating, as would appear, all these minute particulars from personal knowledge, should yet be ignorant what office the 'respectable man' filled of whom he tells the story, whether he was collecting constable or not. The occurrence is said to have taken place

only ' a few years ago :' yet, although I have been resident twenty-one years in the parish, I am unable to conjecture what it refers to, unless it be a distortion of the case of a Mr. Harris, who died about eighteen years ago, and was said to have formed a connection of this kind, which was spoken of at the time as being uncommon. He was not collecting constable, but clerk of the peace, and of the vestry. He was not, however, turned out of his situations till death turned him out; nor did I ever hear that the respected and venerable Rector, Mr. West, incurred any odium, or was thwarted or injured in any manner whatever. But if this is not the foundation upon which Mr. Bickell's precious story is fabricated, I have no knowledge of it.

' A short time before I left Jamaica,' says the Reverend Gentleman, ' I was in St. Thomas in the East, the most religious parish in the island (Kingston, perhaps, excepted), and on one of the Sundays I was there, several overseers put their mills about, in the afternoon, and the whole, or greater part of the gangs, were busy at work.' p. 72.

On this I shall only say, that, residing in St. Thomas in the East, and seeing more of it, certainly, than it was possible for Mr. Bickell to see in a casual visit, *I* have not, since the law of 1816, seen a single instance there of a sugar mill working on Sunday afternoon. I beg the Reverend Gentleman to reflect, that it is a false delicacy to conceal the names of individuals who transgress the law, when, by so doing, he makes his accusation injurious to those who do not, and that justice required he should

have told the hour, and named the estates on which he saw the gangs of negroes at work on a Sunday. Time and place are essential points in evidence, and for the omission of them, in the present instance, only one reason, I suspect, can be assigned—the means they would have afforded of convicting the witness of falsehood.

He adds,—

"But where the mills are not put about, they work so late, on most estates, on Saturday nights, that the negroes, and even the whites belonging to the boiling-house department, are employed all the forenoon of the sabbath potting sugars, &c., so that they are prevented from going to church." p. 72.

The mills are invariably stopped about dusk on Saturday evening, and one white person and 10 or 12 negroes out of two or three hundred on an estate, are employed a few hours longer boiling off the cane-juice in the boilers. The potting of the sugar made on a Saturday afternoon, may occupy one white person and two black for about a couple of hours on Sunday morning. This cannot be done on Saturday night, as the sugar is too hot, nor can it be deferred till Monday morning, as the sugar by that time would have caked or become too hard. And this is the mighty work about which the negroes, and even the whites, belonging to the boiling-house department are engaged, says Mr. Bickell, 'all the forenoon of the sabbath!' How many of the manufacturing establishments in England require some little attendance during the cessation of labour on Sunday?—How many malting floors must be attended to?—How

many smoking glass-houses are to be seen every Sunday afternoon from Blackfriars bridge? And what opinion would be entertained of the candour of a foreign writer, who should bring this forward as a proof of the oppression of the labourers, the profanation of the Sabbath, and indifference about religion in England?*

In the same page (72), Mr. Bickell relates, that going with a friend from the rectory of St. David's on a Sunday morning to Kingston, they called at Albion estate, by the way, to rest themselves; 'as 'it was too hot to ride all the distance, about 20 'miles, without stopping. On this estate,' says he, 'there were six or seven white men, and four or 'five hundred negroes; scarce any of whom at-'tended the parish church, which was only three 'miles distant.' p. 73.

To judge of this charge against the whites on Albion estate, let it be recollected that many of the young men have not horses, and, if they attend church, must walk to it. Now Mr. Bickell and his friend had rode (in a gig I presume) only a distance of about three miles (from the rectory to Albion), and in the cool of the morning, when the heat compelled them to stop (for there is an inn five miles farther on the road, to which otherwise they might have proceeded); and yet this man, so careful of himself, mentions it as a reproach to the book-keepers, that they do not walk twice this distance

* By order of government, distilleries, breweries, soap-works, &c. &c. are visited on Sunday by the officers of the excise.

(to church and home,) in the hottest hours of the day, to hear sermon regularly.

Describing the state of religion among the slaves, Mr. Bickell says,

'Nearly the whole of the field negroes (nine-tenths of the population) have not even the outward form of religion, and are just as great heathens as they were on the banks of the Gambia or Niger.' p. 73.

This is indeed dreadful. Three-fourths of the slaves now living in Jamaica were born and brought up in that island, and yet nearly nine-tenths of the whole number are just as great heathens as they were (meaning, we suppose, as their fathers were) when worshipping MUMBA JUMBA, on the banks of the Gambia and Niger! But more gratifying accounts are given of the progress of religion among them by other and better authorities, and even by Mr. Bickell himself in other parts of this work, particularly where he gives an account of the different churches in the island, and the numbers that attend them (pages 75 to 78); the passage is too long for insertion, and I shall content myself with giving his account of the progress of marriage among the negroes.

'In some of the parishes, a considerable number of marriages have taken place, and particularly of late years, as *some knowledge of Christian religion* has had the effect of inducing *many of them* to leave off their licentious courses. The same parishes where religion has made the greatest progress, there, also, the greatest number of marriages have been solemnized among the slaves.' p. 91.

The following is the account Mr. Bickell gives of the hospitals on the plantations.

'Of the great care taken of slaves in sickness, and of the

boasted and frequent attendance of the medical men on the different properties, I have never seen any very flattering specimens, though I have been on a great many plantations, and I have seen a plenty of doctors. Their hot-houses, or hospitals, are, generally speaking, filthy receptacles; they are very happily styled hot-houses, for they are hot enough; as the hospital is on *most* estates a confined room, very often an earthen floor, &c. On *some* large estates they have a superior kind of hospital, on the first floor, with better accommodation.' p. 52.

The far greater part of the slaves in Jamaica are settled on the sugar estates, and I have already noticed, that on these the hospitals are such spacious buildings, that strangers often mistake them for the mansion-house. The hospitals of petty settlers, who have only a few negroes, are generally on a ground floor, as their own dwelling-houses also are. To hold these up as the general rule, and the superior kind of hospitals on 'some' large plantations, as the exception, is in the usual style and manner of the Reverend Author's 'Real Picture of Slavery,' and of the other witnesses by whose testimony the colonists are condemned.

The reader will perhaps think he has seen enough of this 'new and *very important* work on the subject of West India slavery,' as the Edinburgh Reviewers are pleased to call it, and I shall add only one other story from it, which the worthy clergyman has 'heard,' and deemed deserving (as it is) of a place in his collection.

'Why, gentle reader, I have heard of a lady (viz. a white woman, of good property,) of the parish of Westmoreland, who was accustomed to send her female slaves to a large pond, a cattle pond, to

wash themselves, whilst she herself would be mounted on a charger, and would point out to a driver, or some flogging assistant, such and such females as were to be flogged in their naked state!!!' p. 27.

This brings to my recollection a story which I 'heard' in the United States of America, the scene of which was laid not in the West Indies, but in England. A zealous American, in a dispute with an Englishman about the comparative freedom and happiness enjoyed in their respective countries, thus expressed himself: 'And do you, Sir, compare England, with 'its oppressive and tyrannical aristocracy, to free and 'happy America! Would *we*, do you think, who are 'all *citizens*, submit to be termed the abject *subjects* 'of a King? or to be trampled upon by Princes, 'Dukes and Lords? Have I not heard of a great 'Lord in England who rode up to the cottage door 'of one of his *peasants*, as you call them — ordered 'out the poor man, made him take off his coat and 'spread it in the mud for his fine horse to stand 'upon, nay, hold the horse in this humiliating situa-'tion, while he went into the cottage and deflowered 'his virtuous daughter, unfortunately famed for her 'beauty? And do you speak of liberty or happiness 'in a country where such outrages as these are com-'mitted?'

That many persons in America (with such intellects as Mr. Bickell's) believe this story, I have not the smallest doubt; for it would be nearly as impossible to convince them that freedom or happiness can exist under any aristocratic or kingly government, as it would be to convince many in this coun-

try that any comfort or happiness can be known in a state of slavery.

Such is this 'new and very important work on 'West India slavery'—and such the works which the Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal, will praise and recommend, if they can be made to second the measures it advocates. It would perhaps be unfair to Mr. Bickell not to add the sequel of their eulogium.

'The work produces an irresistible impression of the honesty and right intentions of the author, who was an eye-witness of the scenes he describes; and it confirms, in a remarkable manner, all the leading statements which, on the authority of Mr. Cooper, Dr. Williamson, and Mr. Meabery, were laid before the public two years ago, in the pamphlet called 'Negro Slavery.' Mr. Bickell has also brought forward various new facts of the most damning description, in illustration both of the rigours of negro bondage, and of the extraordinary dissolution of manners prevailing in Jamaica. We strongly recommend the work to general perusal, as a most seasonable antidote to those delusive tales of colonial amelioration by which it has been attempted to abate the horrors so universally felt, in contemplating the cruel and debasing effects of the slave system.' No. 82. p. 488.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

PAPERS RELATING TO THE DISALLOWED ACT OF 1826.

Dispatch from his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department.

Downing-Street, Sept. 22, 1827.

SIR,

THE act passed by the Governor, Council, and Assembly of Jamaica, in the month of December, 1826, intituled "An Act to alter and amend the slave laws of this island," having been referred by his Majesty in Council to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for the affairs of trade and foreign plantations, that committee have reported to his Majesty in Council their opinion that this act ought to be disallowed. The order of his Majesty in Council, approving that report and disallowing the act, will be transmitted to you by the earliest opportunity.

In obedience to the commands of his Majesty in Council, I proceed to communicate to you the grounds of his Majesty's decision upon the subject.

The Privy Council did not submit to his Majesty their advice that this act should be disallowed without great reluctance. The great importance of the subject has been fully estimated; and his Majesty has perceived with much satisfaction the advances which the colonial legislatures have made, in many respects, to meet the recommendations conveyed to them in Lord Bathurst's dispatch of the 11th May, 1826; but, however much his Majesty may have been desirous to sanction these valuable improvements in the slave code of Jamaica, it has been found impossible to overcome the objections to which other enactments of this law are

open. I am commanded to express to you his Majesty's earnest hope, that, upon a deliberate review of the subject, the Legislative Council and Assembly will be disposed to present for your assent another bill, divested of those enactments which have prevented the confirmation of the present act.

Among the various subjects which this act presents for consideration, none is more important in itself, nor more interesting to every class of society in this kingdom, than the regulations on the subject of religious instruction. The eighty-third and the two following clauses must be considered as an invasion of that toleration, to which all his Majesty's subjects, whatever may be their civil condition, are alike entitled. The prohibition of persons in a state of slavery assuming the office of religious teachers might seem a very mild restraint, or rather a fit precaution against indecorous proceedings; but, amongst some of the religious bodies who employ missionaries in Jamaica, the practice of mutual instruction is stated to be an established part of their discipline. So long as the practice is carried on in an inoffensive and peaceable manner, the distress produced by the prevention of it will be compensated by no public advantage.

The prohibition of meetings for religious worship between sunset and sunrise will, in many cases, operate as a total prohibition, and will be felt with peculiar severity by domestic slaves, inhabiting large towns, whose ordinary engagements on Sunday will not afford leisure for attendance on public worship before the evening. It is impossible to pass over without remark the invidious distinction, which is made not only between Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics, but even between Protestant dissenters and Jews. I have indeed no reason to suppose that the Jewish teachers have made any converts to their religion among the slaves, and probably, therefore, the distinction in their favour is merely nominal; still it is a preference, which, in principle, ought not to be given by the Legislature of a Christian country.

The penalties, denounced upon persons collecting contributions from slaves for purposes either of charity or religion, cannot but be felt, both by the teachers and by their fol-

lowers, as humiliating and unjust. Such a law would affix an unmerited stigma on the religious instructor; and it prevents the slave from obeying a positive precept of the Christian religion, which he believes to be obligatory on him, and which is not inconsistent with the duties he owes to his master. The prohibition is, therefore, a gratuitous aggravation of the evils of his condition.

It may be doubtful whether the restriction upon private meetings among the slaves, without the knowledge of the owner, was intentionally pointed at the meetings for religious worship. No objection, of course, could exist to requiring that notice should be given to the owner or manager whenever the slaves attended any such meetings; but, on the other hand, due security should be taken that the owner's authority is not improperly exerted to prevent the attendance of the slaves.

I cannot too distinctly impress upon you, that it is the settled purpose of his Majesty's government to sanction no colonial law, which needlessly infringes on the religious liberty of any class of his Majesty's subjects, and you will understand that you are not to assent to any bill imposing any restraint of that nature, unless a clause be inserted for suspending its operation until his Majesty's pleasure shall be known.

Having thus adverted to this most important branch of the general subject, I proceed to inquire how far the suggestions contained in Lord Bathurst's dispatch of the 11th of May, 1826, have been followed in the act under consideration.

The Council of Protection established under the thirty-third clause of this act, cannot be considered as an effectual substitute for the office of a distinct and independent protector. The council in each parish will consist of those individuals, over whom the protector was to exercise his superintendence. Their duties are limited to the simple case of extreme bodily injury, and are to be discharged only "if they think proper." The periodical returns required from the protector upon oath, are not to be made by the council of protection, nor are they even bound to keep a journal of their proceedings. No provision is made for executing the duties of the office, in differ-

ent parts of the colony, upon fixed and uniform principles, and the number of persons to be united in this trust is such as entirely to destroy the sense of personal and individual responsibility.

In the provisions for the due observance of Sunday, I remark that the continuance of the markets on that day till the hour of eleven is contemplated as a permanent regulation. It is, however, impossible to sanction this systematic violation of the law prevailing in every other Christian country. In the proposals transmitted by Lord Bathurst to his Grace the Duke of Manchester, a temporary departure from this rule was permitted, but only as a relaxation required by peculiar and transitory circumstances.

The clauses denouncing penalties on persons employing their slaves to labour on Sunday are expressed with some ambiguity, so as to leave it doubtful whether the penalty will be incurred at any other time than during crop, or for any work excepting that required about the mills. Neither is it clear that an owner, procuring his slaves to work on Sunday by persuasion, or by any other means than those of direct compulsion, would violate the law. I do not perceive that provision is made for those cases of unavoidable necessity, which would create an exception to the general rule.

Punishments inflicted by the domestic authority of the owner are not required to be made the subject of a report to any public officer, nor does the law require that any interval should elapse between the commission of the crime and the infliction of the punishment. The presence of free witnesses at the infliction of punishments is not declared necessary, nor would the law be broken, whatever might be the severity of the punishment, if it were inflicted by any other method than that of whipping or imprisonment. The use of the whip in the field is not forbidden. Women are not exempted from punishment by flogging. Nor is any presumption of guilt to arise, if the slave shall make a "probable, particular, and consistent" charge against his owner, confirmed by the exhibition of his person bearing the marks of recent and illegal punishment.

In all these respects the provisions of this act fall short of the recommendations of his Majesty's government. It remains to notice other provisions upon the subject of punishment, which have been originally suggested by the colonial legislature.

The act appears to sanction an unlimited delegation of the power of punishment, so that even a fellow-slave might be entrusted with it, provided that the correction does not exceed ten lashes. In the presence of the owner or manager thirty-nine lashes may be inflicted by his authority, an extent of power which cannot be necessary, and which might probably be the source of serious abuse.

The 37th section of this act authorizes private persons to commit their slaves to prison in the public workhouses of the island without the warrant of a justice of the peace, and the preceding section, the 36th, enables the gaoler, as well as the owner, to inflict punishment by whipping in prison without trial. It is difficult to perceive the necessity for such an extension of domestic authority, and, if unnecessary, it is plainly objectionable.

The fine of 10*l.* for inflicting repeated punishments for the same offence can scarcely be incurred in any case, since no record is to be kept ascertaining the grounds of any particular punishment, and the party accused may impute to his slave whatever offences he may think proper, without the necessity of proving them. The fine on a workhouse-keeper inflicting an excessive number of lashes is 10*l.* a punishment which may, in some cases, be entirely disproportionate to so serious an offence.

The complaint, which the slave is authorized to make before any three magistrates, would not, I should fear, be a very effectual means of redress. As they must always be three proprietors of the same parish, there is a manifest danger of the influence of local partialities. As every groundless complaint is to be punished, it is to be feared that many well-founded complaints will not be preferred. The mere failure of evidence in support of a complaint is surely not enough to justify the punishment of the party complaining. The owner

should be bound to prove that the complaint was malicious or frivolous.

On the subject of marriage I observe that no security is taken against the possible case of the unreasonable or capricious refusal of the owner to consent. By confining the power of celebrating marriages to the clergy of the established church, every other class of religious teachers are deprived of the means of exercising a salutary influence over the minds of their disciples, and probably the Roman Catholic Priests may be entitled to say that such an enactment takes away from them a right, which, by the common law, they enjoy in every part of his Majesty's dominions, to which the marriage act of George the Second does not extend. The necessity of undergoing an examination, by a clergyman of the established church, as to the nature and obligations of the marriage contract, is not very apparent, and might perhaps operate as a serious impediment to the formation of such connections. It is difficult to understand how the range of inquiry respecting the "obligations" of the marriage contract is to be limited, since that expression may be supposed to embrace a large variety of moral and religious considerations, with which the slave population in its present state must be very imperfectly conversant.

I observe that this act does not require that any registry should be kept of the marriages of slaves, nor even that any periodical returns should be made of the number of such marriages.

On the subject of the separation of relatives, the word "family" is left without a definition. It is susceptible of so many different meanings, that it would seem peculiarly necessary to ascertain the precise sense in which it is used. The rule laid down in this law seems also to require some better sanction. It is simply a *direction* to the provost-marshal; but, if he should disobey that direction, it is not provided that the sale should be void. A provision appears to be wanting for enabling the officer to ascertain whether any particular slave is or is not a member of the family.

The property of slaves is left by this law in an unprotected

state. No action is given to them, or to any person on their behalf, for the defence or recovery of it. The single case in which any remedy is provided is that in which the property of the slave is *taken away*. No mention is made of that much more important class of cases in which property may be *withheld*. The slave could not under this law recover a debt, nor obtain damages for the breach of a contract. The mode of proceeding by information for penalties, before three justices of the peace, is a remedy to which hardly any one would resort, for the act does not give the amount of the penalty, if recovered, to the injured party, and the slave himself could not make the complaint, except upon the condition of receiving a punishment if the justices should deem it groundless. The slaves are also excluded by the terms of this law from acquiring any interest in land, a restriction which would appear at once impolitic and unnecessary.

On the subject of what has been termed the compulsory manumission of slaves, this act does not profess to adopt the measures suggested by his Majesty's government. It is therefore needless to institute any comparison between those measures and the enactments of this law; but upon that subject I may, perhaps, at no distant period, have occasion to make a further communication to you.

On the subject of gratuitous manumissions, and manumissions effected by voluntary contracts, this act requires that in all cases security shall be given for the maintenance of the slave. In the case of testamentary manumission, the estate of the testator is to be liable to the payment of the annuity of 10*l*. for the support of the slave, if he should become incapable of maintaining himself. These regulations must, of course, operate as a great discouragement to enfranchisements in all cases. Without incurring this inconvenience, an effectual security might have been taken against the abuse of emancipating slaves incapable, from their age or infirmities, of procuring their own subsistence.

It is to be feared that serious inconvenience may arise from the neglect of the proposal to provide a method, by which a slave could ascertain what particular person was entitled to

receive the price of his freedom. In the case of plantation slaves, the title is usually the same with the title to the land itself; and cases are stated to have occurred, in which a slave has lost the whole earnings of his life by paying the price of his liberty to the wrong person.

On the important subject of the evidence of slaves, his Majesty is graciously pleased to signify his approbation of the advance which has been made towards a better system of law; but, in reference to this subject, I am to observe that this law appears to contemplate the admission of the evidence of slaves in those cases of crimes only in which they are usually either the actors or the sufferers, excluding their evidence in other cases—a distinction which does not seem to rest on any solid foundation. There is not any necessary connection between the baptism of a witness and his credibility. The rule, which requires that two slaves at the least shall consistently depose to the same fact on being examined apart, before any free person can be convicted on slave testimony, will greatly diminish the value of the general rule. In some particular cases, such for example as the case of rape, such a restriction might secure impunity to offenders of the worst description. The rejection of the testimony of slaves twelve months after the commission of the crime, would be fatal to the ends of justice in many cases, nor is it easy to discover what solid advantage could result from it in any case.

If the owner of a slave is convicted of any crime on the testimony of that slave, the court has no power of declaring the slave free, although it may exercise that power when the conviction proceeds on other evidence. Highly important as it is to deprive a slave of every motive for giving false evidence against his owner, that object might be secured without incurring the inconvenience of leaving the slave in the power of an owner convicted of the extreme abuse of his authority.

In rejecting the proposal for establishing a record of the names of all slaves sufficiently instructed to be competent witnesses, the colonial legislature appear to have neglected the means of providing a cheap and effectual encouragement

to good conduct, and of investing the religious teachers of the slaves with a powerful and legitimate influence over them.

His Majesty has observed with great satisfaction various provisions in this act for the improvement of the condition of the slaves, which originated exclusively with the colonial legislature. Among them I have particularly to advert to the clause requiring the gratuitous baptism of slaves, and to the regulation by which slaves are allowed one day in each fortnight to cultivate their provision-grounds, exclusive of Sundays, except during the time of crop, the smallest number of days to be allowed in one year being twenty-six. It may, perhaps, however, be necessary that some more effectual means should be devised for enforcing obedience to this law.

The enactment requiring a monthly inspection of the provision-grounds, and the delivery of an adequate supply of provisions, when there is not a sufficient quantity of such grounds, is calculated to produce the most beneficial effects, and might be rendered still more valuable by some alteration in the terms of the oath, which are susceptible of a construction remote from the real intention of the framers of the law. Great advantage may be anticipated from the regulations for the support of the mothers and nurses of large families, and for the protection of old and infirm slaves.

The provisions for the prevention of excessive labour contemplate the working the slaves for eleven hours and a half daily out of crop, and place no limit to the continuance of their work during crop time. Considering the climate in which the labour is to be performed, and that, after the work of the field is over, there will yet remain to be done many offices not falling within the proper meaning of the term "labour," I should fear that the exertions of the slaves, if exacted up to the limits allowed by this law, would be scarcely consistent with a due regard for the health of the labourer.

The crimes of murder and rape, when committed on the persons of slaves, are most properly made punishable by death; but, if these enactments are to be understood not as declaratory of existing laws, but as introductory of new laws,

then it is obvious that there are other offences, which might be perpetrated on the persons of slaves, against which the same punishment should have been denounced.

The rules for the prevention of mutilation and other cruelties, however just and valuable in principle, would, I should fear, lose much of their efficacy in practice from the peculiar complexity of the process, which is to be observed in bringing the offender to justice. In the cases supposed of the dismemberment or mutilation of a slave, fine and imprisonment would seem a very inadequate punishment.

The rules on the subject of runaways claiming to be free, and respecting slaves carried from place to place for sale, seem well adapted to prevent the recurrence of serious abuses. The provisions for the trial of slaves in criminal cases would also appear to be a material improvement on the former law. I perceive, however, that the evidence of slaves on such trials is to be admitted against slaves. It is not said that such evidence shall be admitted for them, although of course this must have been the intention. It is to be regretted that no provision is made for securing the attendance of judges, regularly educated to the legal profession, on slave trials.

It remains to notice those parts of this act, which provide for the punishment or the prevention of crimes, committed by slaves.

The crime of harbouring runaways may be punished with much more severity, when the offender is a slave, that when he is a free man, a distinction which reverses the established principle of justice, that the malignity of crime is enhanced by the superior knowledge and station of the criminal.

In many cases both the nature and amount of the punishment to be inflicted on the offending slave are referred exclusively to the discretion of the Court. I am not aware of any necessity for so unlimited a delegation of authority.

Among capital crimes are enumerated rebellion and rebellious conspiracy. As these are terms unknown to the law of England, it is not fit they should remain on the statute book without some legislative definition of their meaning.

Felony seems to be generally declared capital when com-

mitted by slaves. The case of clergyable felonies is not noticed.

The enactments, by which assault or offering violence to a free person are declared capital, are framed with an extreme laxity of expression, and have an appearance of severity, which I am persuaded was not really contemplated by the framers of this law.

The definition of the offence of obeah will be found to embrace many acts, against which it could not have been really intended to denounce the punishment of death. The definition of the crime of preparing to administer poison is also so extensive as to include many innocent and even some meritorious acts. Thus also the offence of possessing materials used in the practice of obeah is imperfectly described, since no reference is made to the wicked intention, in which alone the crime consists.

The owner of a slave condemned to death or transportation is in all cases to be indemnified at the public expense for the loss of his property. His Majesty's government have repeatedly expressed their disapprobation of this rule of law. It weakens the motives for maintaining good domestic discipline, and for preventing the commission of the crimes, by the authority of the owner. It is unjust to indemnify any man at the public expense for a loss, in which his own culpable neglect of duty may have involved him. To the slave it is unjust to deprive his owner of all pecuniary interests in the preservation of his life; and when the crime of the slave is, as it often may be, the direct consequence of the owner's positive misconduct, it is in the highest degree impolitic to relieve the owner from the loss. The power of remitting the sentences of slaves condemned to hard labour for life, is to be exercised only when the slave evinces, in every respect, a complete reformation of manners. I fear that few men undergo such a total change of character as this under any circumstances, and that a prison is among the last places in which it is to be expected. Independently of this consideration, I apprehend that this clause may in some degree derogate from the power, which, under

his Majesty's instructions, you possess of pardoning offenders, or remitting their punishments.

I have thus explained at length the considerations, which have imposed on his Majesty's government the necessity of submitting to his Majesty their advice that this act should be disallowed. It cannot but be a subject of deep regret to them, that their sense of public duty has prevented their adopting a different course; but I trust that, upon a serious and deliberate review of the subject, the gentlemen of the Legislative Council and Assembly of Jamaica will themselves be disposed to admit, that the decision which has been adopted was inevitable. The preceding remarks will shew that this act has not been disallowed upon any slight ground. The many wise and beneficent provisions which it contains have been fully appreciated, although they have not been thought sufficient to compensate for the irreparable injury which the best interests of the colony might sustain from some of the enactments to which I have particularly referred. Even were the law unobjectionable on every other ground, it would be impossible to surmount the difficulty presented by the clauses for restraining religious liberty.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
(Signed) W. Huskisson.

Lieut. Governor Sir John Keane,
K. C. B, &c. &c. &c.

The First Message of the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica to the House of Assembly, on the subject of Mr. Huskisson's Letter.

Mr. Speaker,

I am commanded by the lieutenant-governor to bring down to the house the copy of a dispatch from his majesty's principal secretary of state for the colonial department, stating in detail the reasons which have induced the lords of the com-

mittee of privy council for trade and foreign plantations to report to his majesty in council their opinion, that an act of this island, entitled 'An act to alter and amend the slave law,' should be disallowed.

This measure has not been adopted without mature consideration, and with the deepest regret. His majesty fully appreciates the many valuable improvements contained in the new slave code; but it has been found impossible to overcome the objections to which some of its enactments are liable.

The lieutenant-governor is convinced that the house will proceed to a temperate reconsideration of a subject, of such vital importance to the peace and tranquillity of the colony, with a sincere disposition to meet, as far as may be practicable, the views of his majesty's government, particularly by avoiding to introduce into a new bill any provisions, which have a tendency to impose restraints on the religious liberties to which all his majesty's subjects, whatever may be their civil condition, are alike entitled.

The lieutenant-governor is particularly instructed to assure the house, that his majesty's government will view, in the most favourable light, any measure of real and substantive improvement, trusting that, in whatever degree it may still fall short of those contemplated by parliament and government, the time is not distant at which a further approximation will be found consistent with the safety and best interests of the island.

Answer of the House of Assembly to the above Message.

RESOLVED,

That it be recommended to the house to send the following message to his honour the lieutenant-governor, in answer to his honour's first message of the 1st November:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR,

We are ordered by the house to wait on your honour, and to thank your honour for the fair and candid manner in which

you have laid before the house the copy of a despatch from his majesty's principal secretary of state for the colonial department, stating in detail the reasons of his majesty's government for disallowing the law, passed last session, 'to alter and amend the slave law.'

After the mature consideration, which the house bestowed upon that law, they regret to find that his majesty has been advised to disallow the same; but they have the consolation to think that, if the slave population be deprived of the many valuable improvements contained in that code, the blame cannot be attributed to the house.

In enacting the eighty-third, eighty-fourth, and eighty-fifth clauses, which are particularly objected to, the house had before them the example afforded by Demerara, and they deemed the restrictions necessary, as well for the peace of the colony as for the well-doing of the slaves: that opinion the house still retain, and consequently are unable to present to your honour any modified law on this subject.

In the law passed last session the house did incorporate every real and substantial improvement, which they could do with safety to the country and with benefit to the slave; but they cannot (for the purpose of gratifying the parliament and government of Great Britain) agree to adopt measures incompatible with the best interests of the colonies.

The house are aware that your honour cannot, under the instructions you have received, sanction any bill on the subject of religion without a suspending clause; and, as the house will never make a deliberate surrender of their undoubted and acknowledged rights, by legislating in the manner prescribed, they will not lay before your honour any bill respecting the slave population.

Report from Committee of the House of Assembly, appointed to take into consideration the Letter from Mr. Huskisson to his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. Barrett, from the committee appointed to take into

consideration the letter from Mr. Huskisson to his honour the lieutenant-governor, reported as follows:

MR. SPEAKER,

Your committee, appointed to take into consideration the letter of Mr. Huskisson to the lieutenant-governor, and to report thereon to the house, have drawn up several resolutions, and have replied to the objections which Mr. Huskisson states to have occasioned the disallowance of the slave act by his Majesty.

These resolutions, and the reply, your committee recommend to the consideration of the house.

RESOLVED,

1st. That the house have learnt with surprise and disappointment, that the committee of privy council for trade and foreign plantations have advised his Majesty to disallow the act, passed last session, intituled "An act to alter and amend the slave law."

2d. That his Grace the Duke of Manchester having, in his speech at the close of the last session, declared his opinion "that the mildness and moderation which were evinced throughout the law, and the beneficial alteration produced in the condition of the slave in many particulars, would be highly satisfactory to his Majesty's government," the house rather expected to be honoured with the unreserved commendation of his Majesty, than to have their labours contemned, and their sacrifices undervalued and rejected.

3d. That this proceeding on the part of the King's ministers must shake the confidence of the island in their wisdom and justice, inasmuch as, for several years successively, plans of melioration have been pressed upon the house, and it has been earnestly suggested to the house that the imperial parliament, and Great Britain generally, anxiously desired the amendment of the slave law. With all that respect for the wishes of the King and of our fellow-subjects, which, as belonging to one common empire, we feel bound to observe, this house maturely weighed the various propositions made through the secretary for the colonies, and adopted not only all of the

propositions, which appeared to be in the slightest degree beneficial to the colony, but they even conceded to government in every point that was not positively mischievous, and in some of doubtful, if not of dangerous, tendency. The house do not venture to reproach his Majesty's government with vacillation and caprice in the change of councils, which has led to the disallowance of a law once so eagerly coveted, yet they find it impossible, in Mr. Huskisson's dispatch to the lieutenant-governor, to discover any sound reason for the course that has been pursued.

4th. That the house conceive this important error to have been committed by his Majesty's government:—Instead of comparing the new act with the institutions of Jamaica, the advisers of the crown have kept in sight the laws and customs of the mother-country, and have passed sentence on a law designed for the regulation of slaves, as if it were an act to fetter the minds and persons of a free people. Moreover, his Majesty's advisers have altogether neglected the obvious propriety of contrasting the new with the old law. Had they deigned to open the law of 1816, they would have found that it wanted many of those humane provisions, which the improved civilization of the slaves enabled the house to introduce into the law of 1826. If it be admitted that the new law falls below the reasonable hopes of the King's ministers, yet it far exceeds the old law in restraints upon the abuse of the master's authority, and in civil rights conceded to the slaves. And had the two acts been judged by their respective merits, and in the same spirit of tenderness to the slaves, which the King's government has professed for so many years, it is considered by the house that the act of 1816 would not have been revived.

5th. That the disallowed slave act, in the admission of slaves to give evidence in criminal cases, went beyond the expressed recommendation of the King's government; for in the second proposition of the colonial minister, sent down to the house by the Duke of Manchester at the commencement of the last session, and declared by his grace to have "received the unqualified approbatiou of both houses of parlia-

ment," it is observed that " the admission of the evidence of slaves is not to extend to cases, where a white person or person of free condition shall be charged with or prosecuted for any capital crime." However, not only are slaves by the disallowed act permitted to give evidence in cases where white and free persons are prosecuted for capital crimes, but their evidence has actually been admitted in two such cases during the short operation of the act. In one, the offender, a white man, was convicted, partly on slave evidence, of murder, and, in the other, a man of colour was convicted of manslaughter solely on such evidence.

6th. That the house hear with pain that, although this and other " valuable improvements are fully estimated by his Majesty's privy council, yet it was impossible to overcome the objections to which other enactments of this law are open."

7th. That for the information of his Majesty's government, and the justification of the house to his Majesty, the house will proceed to examine the objections, which have prevented the confirmation of the act.

The eighty-third and the two following clauses are called " an invasion of that toleration, to which all his Majesty's subjects, whatever may be their civil condition, are alike entitled." The reasoning that follows this doctrine is not of weight enough to be considered, the doctrine itself being utterly at variance with the institutions of Jamaica. The owner is bound by law to lodge, clothe, and feed his slaves; he provides for their comfort in infancy, in sickness, and in age, and, however useless or depraved they may be, this obligation cannot be evaded. If, therefore, slaves are protected from the ordinary casualties of life, and even from the effects of their own indolence and thoughtlessness, and often of their crimes, they necessarily incur obligations to their master, unknown in societies where the connection between the upper and lower classes is more loosely cemented. The eighty-third clause prohibits the preaching and teaching of slaves, not because mischief might possibly accrue, but because it had been found by experience, as the preamble to the clause declares, " to be attended with the most pernicious consequences, and even

with the loss of life." So long as the slave subsists at the cost of his master, so long must that master's right be admitted to watch over his actions, on which depend his health and his life. Neither health nor life can be secure, if slaves are allowed to unsettle the understandings of each other by mutually inculcating their crude notions of religion, and have free licence to meet, under the pretence of preaching, at unseasonable hours and at improper places. The house duly appreciate the pious motives of the King's ministers, who would extend the blessings of religion all over the world; but, nevertheless, it is their opinion that no persons, however dignified in station and zealous in the cause of Christianity, are competent to judge of regulations intended to restrain the malpractices of "ignorant, superstitious, and designing slaves," unless they have made themselves acquainted with the African character by a long residence among them. These remarks equally apply to the eighty-fourth clause. Meetings for religious worship between sunrise and sunset are prohibited only to unlicensed preachers; and it is believed that in no well-organized society are persons, without character, or of doubtful or secret views, suffered to go at large, under shelter of the night, amongst an ignorant peasantry, and make upon their minds an impression that may be dictated by political or religious fanaticism. In England no such unlimited meaning is given to toleration, as it is attempted to force upon this colony. By the 52d Geo. III. chap. 155, it is provided that places of religious worship must be certified and registered, under certain penalties for neglect; and by the same law persons, who shall teach *in any place*, without consent of the owner or occupier, are subject to a penalty. Licences are never denied to persons having proper credentials, and ministers so licensed are authorized to worship till eight o'clock; consequently persons, who either have not applied for, or have been refused, a licence, must be considered as without character and with dangerous designs. Although the slaves of Jamaica have advanced rapidly in civilization within a very few years, yet it is not pretended that their progress has been so great, that all those guards can be dispensed with, which

were thought essential by our predecessors. The eighty-third and eighty-fourth clauses are not innovations, as Mr. Huskisson seems to suppose: they are taken from the old slave law, and come again into operation on the disallowance of the new law, with this difference, that the new law provides against any misconception of the law in respect to Catholics and Jews, and permits licensed ministers to perform divine worship at any licensed place of worship to the hour of eight; and when it is remembered that in Jamaica the setting of the sun varies from half-past five to half-past six, it will appear that time enough is afforded for the night worship of slaves.

The house notice with regret the error, into which Mr. Huskisson has fallen in concluding his observations on the eighty-fourth clause. There is no invidious distinction contemplated therein, in favour of the Roman Catholics or the Jews, at the expence of the dissenters. The legislature believed that there are certain rites and festivals celebrated at night in the Roman and Jewish churches, and it was in their anxiety to avoid even the appearance of molesting the worship of two orderly and loyal descriptions of persons, that the offending proviso was introduced into the clause. The house might have expected that the late act of the legislature, to extend to Jews the privileges enjoyed by his Majesty's Christian subjects, would have been sufficient in itself to exempt the people of Jamaica from the charge of intolerance. It may here be remarked, that these two obnoxious clauses, with the amendments above noticed, have formed portions of the law of Jamaica every since the slave code was first enacted.

The next clause objected to is the eighty-fifth, and it is to be defended by the same arguments, which have been used in defence of the eighty-third and eighty-fourth. The master provides all the necessaries of life for his slave, and he has an unquestionable right to guard against their misappropriation, and it is the duty of his representatives in assembly to assist him in this object by legislative provisions. The slave must neither be suffered to injure his health and strength by nightly wanderings, nor to strip himself of his clothing, and barter his tools and his food, under pretence of contributing to the

support of itinerant expounders of the Gospel. In the words of the clause, " an ample provision is already made by the public and by private persons for the religious instruction of slaves," and persons, whatever may be their profession and pretension, who use that most irresistible engine with weak minds, the power of persuasion, to extort from slaves the hard-earned reward of industry, and indirectly tempt them, where their own resources fail, to rob their masters and their fellow-slaves, such persons, so preying on the poverty, the superstitious fears, and too often on the crimes of their proselytes, brand themselves by this act alone with meanness and hypocrisy, and deserve a far more heavy punishment than the being compelled to disgorge a small part of the profits of their extortion. It is observed in Mr. Huskisson's letter that this clause affixes an unmerited stigma on the collector of monies from slaves, but it is submitted that the extreme disgust and detestation in which all free persons are held, who accept gifts without return, and who in any way take advantage of the easy disposition and ignorance of slaves, is a feeling rather to be encouraged than suppressed. Their peculium is thereby protected, and the want of a positive law to secure them in its unmolested enjoyment was unfelt and unknown up to the hour when the disallowed slave act was passed. When that law came under the consideration of the legislature, and it was determined to give to negro property that protection by express law, which it before derived from usage, it naturally followed that, in securing the negro from the imaginary oppression of his master, the legislature would not leave him a prey to the oily and delusive tongue of a self-ordained preacher. This prohibition of levying a revenue on slaves is not, as Mr. Huskisson terms it, " a gratuitous aggravation of the evils of their condition," but it is designed as a security against the avarice of unhallowed men, who are *known* to cajole slaves out of their substance, and, where soft words fail, who do not forbear to call up the most fearful images to their assistance; threatening their simple followers with the pains of hell-fire, and with eternal damnation, if they are slow and scanty in their contributions.

Mr. Huskisson says, in his letter to the lieutenant-governor, "I cannot too distinctly impress upon you that it is the settled purpose of his Majesty's government to sanction no colonial law, which needlessly infringes on the religious liberty of any class of his Majesty's subjects, and you will understand that you are not to assent to any bill, imposing any restraint of that nature, unless a clause be inserted for suspending its operation until his Majesty's pleasure shall be known."

This instruction contains an absolute and peremptory denial of the right of the Jamaica legislature to pass laws on one of the most important and essential subjects, which can come under the notice of any legislature. His Majesty's ministers do not seem to have been aware that the old slave law affords already a certain degree of protection to the master from the designs of enthusiastic and necessitous preachers. The disallowance of the new law will only compel him to exert more constantly, and perhaps rigorously, his authority as master; and, if he cannot by law punish the religious extortioner, he can at least punish the trespasser, and drive him off his lands; and he can keep his slave within limits where no preacher dare intrude. The house must regret that having extended the rights of the slave, and abridged the authority of the master, in the hope of giving satisfaction to the king, their intentions and their law should be so strangely misunderstood as to be made the plea for depriving them of a large part of their constitutional privileges. What privileges are left to them are of trifling value, since they too may be reduced, or altogether taken away, whenever it may please his Majesty's ministers to be discontented with the use that is made of them. The house little expected that the very dispatch, that bears such marked respect to mendicant sectarians, would contain a mandate that overturns the ancient and acknowledged constitution of this important island.

His Majesty's ministers "do not consider the council of protection, established under the thirty-third clause of the new act, an effectual substitute for the office of a distinct and independent protector." This house will never consent to fix an unmerited stigma on their constituents, by sanctioning the

introduction of a spy into the bosom of society under the name of a protector of slaves, and by admitting, in the face of truth, that our laws are not maintained and respected by the people.—The house never will sanction the humiliating and unjust conclusion, that our magistracy are incapable of discharging honestly and efficiently the duties imposed on them. Such an anomaly was never before heard of in a country, having its own laws and legislature, as the introduction of officers from a distant kingdom to keep watch upon the inhabitants, to pry into their actions, and to put thereon whatever construction they please, or rather the construction that will best please the persons that appoint them and pay them. Besides the shame of being subjected to such controul and superintendence, what truth and justice could be hoped for from men, who are to be independent both in purse and character of the people they are to reside amongst? Looking to Great Britain, and, possibly, to the bitter enemies of the colonies, for reward and praise, either of which they can only expect in proportion to the diligence they exercise in their inquisitorial office, it is impossible to doubt that the most innocent actions will appear suspicious; that no one will dare to inflict the most necessary chastisement on his slaves, lest he incur the imputation of cruelty: and that, consequently, insubordination will ensue, and the free inhabitants will be forced to abandon their possessions. His Majesty's subjects of this island will never permit this novel inquisition to be established amongst them, nor will they ever cease to regard the proposition to introduce it as the artfully devised plan of our enemies and rivals to destroy the colony, by rendering the slaves disobedient and valueless, and thereby inducing a voluntary and uncompensated surrender of the claims of the owner to their services. But, throwing aside our rights of property, as Englishmen ourselves, and the descendants of Englishmen, we view with abhorrence that minute interference with our domestic affairs, which is only exercised by the weakest governments, and yielded to by the most degraded population.

Mr. Huskisson's dispatch proceeds to state, that "in the

provisions for the due observance of Sunday, I remark that the continuance of the markets on that day till the hour of eleven is contemplated as a permanent regulation. It is, however, impossible to sanction this systematic violation of the law prevailing in every other Christian country." In the proposals transmitted by Lord Bathurst to his Grace the Duke of Manchester a " temporary departure from this rule was permitted, but only as a relaxation required by peculiar and transitory circumstances."

In reply to this unmeasured reprobation of the sixth clause of the disallowed act, it might be sufficient to say, that by the old law the markets are permitted to be held till Sunday night (except during the hours of divine service), and that the restriction to eleven o'clock in the morning was undeniably an improvement on the ancient mode of observing the Sabbath. It is submitted that this amendment of the law does not merit the reproach of a systematic violation of the Sabbath; nor were the house assured, until informed thereof by the dispatch of Mr. Huskisson, that Sunday was held sacred for religious worship by the laws of every Christian country, Jamaica only excepted. It was supposed by the house that in all Catholic, and in most Protestant states, Sunday is considered a day of recreation, and even sometimes of agricultural labour. Nevertheless, though somewhat averse to deprive the slaves of their accustomed relaxation, and to limit the hours of marketing, which it was apprehended would create, and which actually did create, much dissatisfaction and some tumult, the house, so far from contemplating the systematic violation of the Sabbath, complied almost with the letter of Lord Bathurst's fifth proposition. They ventured, it is true, to extend the time limited in the proposition from ten till eleven o'clock, that the more distant negroes might participate in the advantage of the market. Mr. Huskisson and his Majesty's ministers seem to have overlooked the last clause of the disallowed act, limiting its duration to three years, otherwise they never would have contemplated the continuance of the markets on Sunday till the hour of eleven, or any other clause of the act, as a permanent regulation.

It is apprehended by the house that there is no ambiguity in the clauses denouncing penalties on persons, employing their slaves to labour on Sunday. The eighth clause enacts "that slaves shall be allowed one day in every fortnight, exclusive of Sundays, to cultivate their own provision-grounds, except during the time of crop, under the penalty of 20*l.* to be recovered against the overseer or person having the care of such slaves."

The plain interpretation of this clause is, that to work negroes on Sundays, except during crop, is an offence punishable by a fine of 20*l.*; and, to prevent too much latitude to this exception, the tenth clause provides that, even during crop, slaves shall be exempted from the ordinary labour of the estate on Sundays, and that no mill shall be put about between the hours of seven o'clock on Saturday night and five o'clock on Monday morning; and, as it is not provided by the law that owners may persuade or hire their slaves to work on Sunday, the house conceive that the penalty would be clearly incurred, whether the labour was extorted by compulsion, or induced by persuasion, or purchased by money. It was not thought proper to make "provision for those cases of unavoidable necessity, which would create an exception to the general rule," because it is scarcely possible to define all the cases of unavoidable necessity that may arise, and it was considered that the distinguishing such cases from the usual plantation labour might be safely left to the tribunals.

To the remarks respecting punishments, inflicted by the domestic authority of the owner, the house reply, that after the most attentive investigation of the subject, it was determined that a report of punishments inflicted to a public officer would be only throwing out a temptation to evasion and perjury, where undue severity was practised; and would be troublesome and useless where the slaves were humanely treated, and would also be incomplete, without the creation of new officers and a new office. Any increase to the burthens of the island cannot be endured, whilst it remains in its present poor and tottering condition: And the house must observe, in answer to this and others of Lord Bathurst's propositions, that

they are conceived under the mistaken impression that our slaves are miserable and abject, our free inhabitants lawless and tyrannical, and our magistracy ignorant and prejudiced, and without authority to maintain the laws. The inhabitants of Jamaica do not deserve these imputations, and the house cannot be expected to legislate as if they did deserve them.

The presence of free witnesses at the infliction of punishment is not declared necessary, because the island is too extensive, and too thinly peopled, to make the execution of such a regulation practicable, even were no other inconveniencies apprehended from it. And the law does not require that an interval should elapse between the commission of the crime and the infliction of the punishment, because, where only a slight punishment is deserved, it might be necessary to confine the culprit till the hour of punishment arrived, which would add to the penalty of his offence, and, in more serious offences, to postpone the punishment is to give the offender a chance of escape. Every plantation cannot be provided with a secure prison for the detention of culprits under sentence; the particular time of punishment was therefore left to the discretion of the master or overseer. Mr. Huskisson says, "the law would not be broken, whatever might be the severity of the punishment, if it were inflicted by any other method than that of whipping or imprisonment." If Mr. Huskisson will refer to the thirty-third clause, he will discover that he has fallen into a most important error. It is there provided that "if any person shall mutilate, or direct or consent to mutilate, dismember, wantonly or cruelly whip, maltreat, beat, bruise, wound, or imprison, or keep in confinement without sufficient support, or brand, any slave or slaves, he shall be punished by fine, not exceeding 100*l.* or imprisonment, not exceeding twelve months, or both, and the slave, so mutilated or otherwise maltreated, shall, in atrocious cases, be manumised by the court before whom the offender shall have been convicted." And, moreover, the fine of 100*l.* is to be paid to the justices and vestry of the parish to which the slave belongs, who shall, in consideration thereof, pay to the suffering slave a pension of 10*l. per annum* for his life, and, in case the

owner or owners of such slave or slaves shall appear capable of paying the costs and charges of such prosecution, the justices and vestry are empowered to commence a suit against such owner or owners of such slave or slaves, and recover all costs and charges out of purse paid by them, laid out, and expended on such suit. The house conceive that there cannot possibly exist an instance of cruelty or severity that is not punishable by this clause; it contains a complete enumeration of every possible case of personal ill-treatment, and its efficacy is proved by several convictions.

Mr. Huskisson closes the paragraph with these remarks, "The use of the whip in the field is not forbidden. Women are not exempted from punishment by flogging. Nor is any presumption of guilt to arise, if the slave shall make a probable, particular, and consistent charge against his owner, confirmed by the exhibition of his person bearing the marks of recent and illegal punishment."

The whip is not forbidden in the field, lest the abandonment too suddenly of a long established usage should be misunderstood by the slaves. On many properties the whip is no longer an instrument of punishment, and the use of it will soon be so generally discontinued as to enable the legislature to restrict or abolish it by law.—Until negro women have acquired more of the sense of shame that distinguishes European females, it will be impossible in respect to them to lay aside altogether punishment by flogging, there being no substitute that promises to be accompanied with the same salutary dread.

By the one hundred and thirtieth clause of the disallowed act slave evidence is admissible in cases of "rape, mutilation, branding, dismembering, or cruelly beating or confining, without sufficient support, a slave or slaves." And the house cannot avoid the expression of their surprise that his Majesty's government have so entirely overlooked this clause as to imagine that no presumption of guilt is to arise under the circumstances mentioned in the close of the above extract. It is difficult to conceive a case in which either, by direct or circumstantial evidence, a guilty person will not be convicted

under this clause. If, however, his Majesty's government would insist that the marks of ill-treatment alone, without other evidence than the assertion of the maltreated slave, are to be sufficient to insure conviction, the house can only regret that they feel it to be impossible to place the lives, persons, and properties of their constituents at hazard on what appears to them such unsatisfactory and uncertain proofs of guilt.

It is complained that the disallowed act "sanctions an unlimited delegation of punishment even to slaves, provided that the correction does not exceed ten lashes."—It must frequently occur that slaves are placed in superintendence over their fellow-slaves, and, unless they possess some power of punishment, their authority will not be submitted to. It was therefore thought that ten lashes, which may not be repeated in the same day, was the most moderate limitation of the power of inflicting punishment, which could be delegated to a negro in authority, consistent with the maintenance of good order and obedience. And it appears to the house not quite consistent with the enlarged views of government in favour of the slaves, that the most confidential amongst them should be denied the limited power entrusted to them by this act. For if slaves, however well-behaved, are regarded as unfit apportioners of a slight punishment, they must also be considered as unworthy to be distinguished in any way from their fellows, and the best encouragement for good conduct will be taken away. The legislature did not deprive the owner of the power of inflicting punishment to the extent of thirty-nine lashes on his slave, because, however humane a contrary system may at first sight appear, it would be found in practice to have rather an opposite tendency. Under the existing system the master is accustomed to punish his slaves for almost every offence, of which they are guilty, and it often happens that thirty-nine lashes are inflicted by his order for crimes, which in the eye of the law are punishable with transportation and death. It is not pretended that offenders, in strict justice, should thus evade the penalty of their misdeeds, yet the house, in passing an act to *meliorate* the condition of the slaves, would have been scarcely justifiable, had they in-

directly added to the severity of the laws against them. But it must be remarked that, if thirty-nine or any other number of lashes are inflicted in a cruel manner, the master is liable to exemplary punishment.

It is objected to the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh clauses that they authorize private persons to commit their slaves to prison, without the warrant of a justice of the peace, and enable the gaoler to inflict punishment by whipping without trial.—It has been found expedient to leave in the hands of the master that power over the person of the slave, by the immediate exertion of which any symptoms of disobedience may be suppressed. If the master or superintendent is on all occasions to seek the intervention of the magistrates or of a jury, his authority would be dangerously weakened. The legislature has carefully guarded against the abuse of the master's power, but he cannot be deprived of it without hazarding the overthrow of the system itself.

The house, in answer to the observation that "the fine of 10*l.* for inflicting repeated punishments for the same offence can scarcely be incurred," adduce the fact that the penalty has already been levied on the mere testimony of the slave, and the refusal of the offender to contradict the slave's testimony.

If a workhouse-keeper inflicts an excessive number of lashes, the punishment is not 10*l.* only, as his Majesty's government apprehends; his offence comes under the clause that provides against wantonly or cruelly whipping or mutilating slaves, and is punishable with fine and imprisonment.

Mr. Huskisson, in his zeal for a protectorate of slaves, "fears that the complaint, which the slave is authorized to make before the magistrates, would not be a very effectual means of redress." The house can assure Mr. Huskisson that his fear is unfounded, and that a protector of slaves would be an useless officer in any part of the island, the magistracy having too much regard to the oaths and the sacred duties of their office to violate the one, and neglect the other, for the purpose of sheltering cruelty and oppression.

Mr. Huskisson observes, "as every groundless complaint is to be punished, it is to be feared that many well-founded

complaints will not be preferred." The clause is mis-stated:— It runs thus, " if it shall appear to the justices of the peace that the complaint of such slave is frivolous or unfounded, it shall be lawful for them, and they are hereby required, to dismiss the complaint, or to direct such punishment by confinement to hard labour or whipping, or both, as to them may seem proper." If this discretion was not left to the council of protection to punish frivolous complaints, negroes would be constantly in the road to and about the police offices, and never at their work.

The house cannot think it necessary to defend the restrictions on marriage, since it is admitted by Mr. Huskisson, that similar restrictions are imposed in England by the marriage act of George the Second. He is pleased to term the influence of the dissenting ministers " salutary;" the house have thought such influence may sometimes be pernicious, and they are not yet prepared to extend it over the marriages of their slaves. The house conceived that the holy contract of marriage should not be entered into without some knowledge of its nature and obligations, and they confess themselves to be yet of the same opinion. Mr. Huskisson observes that no registry of the marriage of slaves is kept. The house do not know why such registry should be thought requisite, and the expence is an insurmountable objection, even were some degree of utility to be derived from the measure. There is, however, a register of slave marriages kept in every parish, and if Mr. Huskisson had referred to the 6th of Geo. IV. chap. 17. sec. 41. he would have found that the rector and curate of each parish are compelled to keep a separate register for slaves. Mr. Huskisson remarks, " on the subject of the separation of relatives, the word *family* is left without a definition. It is susceptible of so many different meanings, that it would seem peculiarly necessary to ascertain the precise sense in which it is used. The rule laid down in this law seems also to require some better sanction. It is simply a direction to the provost-marshal; but, if he should disobey that direction, it is not provided that the sale should be void. A provision appears to be wanting for enabling the officer to ascer-

tain whether any particular slave is or is not a member of the family."

The word family is not left undefined by the law, as Mr. Huskisson imagines.—It is declared by the fifth clause of the disallowed act to mean "a man and his wife, and his or their children;" and if at a provost-marshal's sale parents are separated from their children, or *vice versâ*, or brothers and sisters are divided, the supreme court will annul the sale as a matter of course. And it is to be further remarked of the fifth clause, that it is only an extension of the 8th of Geo. II. chap. 5. by which the provost-marshal only and his deputies are restricted to sales of families; but by the disallowed act the collectors of all public and parish taxes are included in the restriction.

The house admit that the property of slaves appears to be inadequately protected, but it was found impracticable to permit slaves to appear as suitors in the courts of justice, without in a great degree undermining their dependence on their owners.—It is impossible to pass laws for slaves, as if they were free persons; and, if slaves labour under any unavoidable disabilities, they also enjoy many immunities. If slaves cannot sue, they cannot be sued. Their persons are sacred to all but their owers and the laws. It is utterly inconsistent with a state of slavery to give slaves the freedom of action that is indispensable to enable them to collect witnesses, to consult lawyers, and to attend courts; and it is difficult to devise a mode, by which slaves shall be compelled to pay their own debts without infringing on the property of the master. The house, the land, the clothes, the provisions, and tools of the slave are supplied by the owner, and no part thereof can, without the grossest injustice, be made liable for the debts of the slave; and still less can the person of the slave be placed at the disposal of his creditor, that being also the property of his master.

It is thought by his Majesty's government, that to exclude slaves from acquiring any interest in land is impolitic and unnecessary. Land cannot be a desirable acquisition to the slave, his duty to his owner not affording him time to culti-

vate more land than the portion always allotted to him by his master for his maintenance.

Mr. Huskisson has not accurately examined the disallowed act, or he would have avoided his several misconceptions of its provisions. He imagines that, in all cases of gratuitous and testamentary manumission, security is to be given for the maintenance of the slave. But it is provided by the seventy-sixth clause, that the manumission bond shall be dispensed with, on proof being given that he is not old or infirm; and by the sixty-seventh clause the bond is likewise dispensed with in devises of freedom. Mr. Huskisson "fears that serious inconvenience may arise from the neglect to provide a method, by which a slave can ascertain what particular person is entitled to receive the price of his freedom." This question comes under the head of compulsory manumission, the discussion of which Mr. Huskisson has postponed, and the house think it most adviseable to follow his example. If Mr. Huskisson's observation be intended to apply to that provision in the disallowed act, which relates to the payment of the price of those voluntary manumissions, which it is the object of the act to facilitate and encourage, the house cannot perceive that any difficulty exists. The price is to be paid into the hands of the receiver-general, under the direction of the custos or senior magistrate of the parish where the slave to be manumitted resides—the latter person is selected, in order that the utmost facility may be afforded in concluding the treaty of sale. It is left by the seventy-first section of the disallowed act to the court of chancery or supreme court, on summary petition, to decide on the claims of the persons entitled to the principal or interest of the purchase-money—the purchaser of the freedom, as soon as he has paid the purchase-money into the receiver-general's office, is wholly relieved from any difficulty or responsibility as to the person or persons entitled to receive it. It is to be observed, that the sixty-seventh and the six following clauses of the disallowed act are re-enactments of the act passed in the fifth year of the present reign, chapter twenty-one, entitled "An act for removing impediments to manumission of slaves by owners,

having only a limited interest," and were made to extend to other cases than those embraced by that act.

The house expected to obtain some credit for a measure, which removed considerable difficulties in effecting voluntary manumission of slaves, and under which a considerable increase in the number of manumissions has already taken place.

Mr. Huskisson remarks that, " on the important subject of the evidence of slaves, his Majesty is graciously pleased to signify his approbation of the advance, which has been made towards a better system of law; but, in reference to this subject, I am to observe, that this law appears to contemplate the admission of the evidence of slaves in those cases of crimes only, in which they are usually either the actors or the sufferers, excluding their evidence in other cases, a distinction which does not seem to rest on any solid foundation."

The house rejoice that there is a part of the disallowed act approved of by his Majesty, although with much reservation. It is an error to suppose that the evidence of slaves is only admitted when they are actors or sufferers. No pleader would dare to make the assertion in our courts. In the beginning of this report two cases are quoted of free persons having been either partly or wholly convicted under this act on the evidence of slaves, and in one of these cases no negro was either an actor or a sufferer, yet the question of the admissibility of negro evidence was not mooted by the counsel of the prisoner. The object of the legislature, in excluding the evidence of unbaptized slaves, was the encouragement and promotion of Christianity, and it was also considered that the indiscriminate admission of slave evidence, and the attaching thereto the weight that before only belonged to the evidence of free persons, would be too sudden an innovation on long established usage, and moreover, as will hereafter appear, the propositions of Lord Bathurst did not invite the house to the indiscriminate admission of slave evidence.

It is observed by Mr. Huskisson that, " if the owner of the slave is convicted of any crime on the testimony of that slave, the court has no power of declaring the slave free,

although it may exercise that power when the conviction proceeds on other evidence. Highly important as it is to deprive a slave of every motive for giving false evidence against his owner, that object might be secured without incurring the inconvenience of leaving the slave in the power of an owner convicted of the extreme abuse of his authority." By the thirty-fourth clause, already referred to, the court has the power of declaring the slave free, if, by his or any other testimony, an atrocious case of maltreatment is proved against the owner. But if Mr. Huskisson would have slaves manumised in all cases, where the owner is convicted of any offence on their testimony, the house have only to reply that no further enactment will be necessary to insure the speedy manumission of all the slaves of the island, unless indeed our juries reject such suspicious testimony, to avert the ruin that must follow its reception.

In declining to accede to the proposal "for establishing a record of the names of all slaves, sufficiently instructed to be competent witnesses," the colonial legislature was governed by the assurance that such registry would be burthensome and useless. It is customary in slave-courts to examine slaves respecting their knowledge of the nature of an oath, and the punishment they become subject to, if they tender false evidence. This custom has been proved by experience to be a sufficient protection to prisoners. The house venture to consider that a *vivâ voce* examination in open court is a better mode of determining the value of evidence than a record of names; and the house is somewhat at a loss to reconcile the alleged necessity of "a record of all slaves, sufficiently instructed to be competent witnesses," with the dissatisfaction expressed by Mr. Huskisson at that portion of the evidence clause, that requires slaves to be Christians before they can be witnesses.

Mr. Huskisson fears that "the exertions of the slaves, if exacted up to the limits allowed by the disallowed law, would be scarcely consistent with a due regard for the health of the labourer." Negroes do not exert themselves at work like

Europeans; they seldom fatigue themselves, and it is common for them to travel many miles, or to dance the entire night, after the longest day's labour. It is believed by the house that labourers work much harder and longer in Great Britain, and are rewarded with a smaller share of the necessaries and comforts of existence.

It is observed by Mr. Huskisson, "that the crimes of rape and murder, when committed on the persons of slaves, are properly punishable by death; and that there are other offences, which might be perpetrated on the persons of slaves, against which the same punishment should have been denounced." No other offence, that can be classed with rape and murder, has ever come under the cognizance of our courts, otherwise it would not have been overlooked by the legislature.

It is considered that the "rules for the prevention of mutilation and other cruelties would lose much of their efficacy in practice." But a more minute inspection of the disallowed act will convince Mr. Huskisson that his apprehension on this head is groundless. By such inspection he will also discover that the dismemberment or mutilation of a slave is not, as he conceives, only punishable by heavy fine and long imprisonment, but also by the manumission and consequent loss of the slave, if the owner is the offender. And, if the outrage has been committed on the slave of another, the offender is exposed, in addition to the penalties, to an action of damages for the injury the owner has sustained in his property. The house, however, are happy to add that these crimes have long ceased to disgrace the island of Jamaica.

Mr. Huskisson, on the subject of runaways, renews his remark that the evidence of slaves in criminal cases appears to be admissible only against slaves. The right honourable gentleman does the legislature of this island no more than justice, in supposing that the law was intended to admit the evidence of slaves both for and against slaves. It is not easy to conceive how a different meaning can be ascribed to the law.

Mr. Huskisson "regrets that judges, regularly educated in

the legal profession, do not attend on slave trials." The unpaid magistrates that preside at slave-trials are acquainted with the habits and vices of negroes; they have for their guide the slave code, which is neither intricate nor voluminous, and it is believed that as equal and substantial justice is dealt out by the court so constituted, as if it was composed of lawyers, versed in all the subtleties and refinement of English jurisprudence.

It is observed by Mr. Huskisson that "the crime of harbouring runaways may be punished with much more severity, when the offender is a slave than when he is a free person, a distinction which reverses the established principle of justice, that the malignity of crimes is enhanced by the superior knowledge and station of the criminal." But, on adverting to the forty-fifth and forty-sixth clauses, the principle will be seen, which has, in this instance, guided the legislature. The harbouring of runaways by slaves may be comparatively innocuous, and the court has the power of inflicting a slight punishment; but it may also be a crime of the highest order. The runaway may have designs dangerous to the peace of the community, and he may be aided in those designs by the wicked connivance of the slave that harbours him. The free person cannot be presumed to have any other view in concealing runaways than to profit by their labour; his punishment is accordingly limited to fine and imprisonment, and he is compelled to make that satisfaction to the owner of the runaway in money, which is not exacted from the offending slave, because the law never supposes that a slave is possessed of money. The free person is also liable to the heavy penalties of the Inveigling Act.

Mr. Huskisson is displeased that the nature and amount of the punishment of offending slaves are often referred to the discretion of the court. This course has never been adopted without good reason, and the effect thereof is not increased severity towards the slave, but a strong leaning to inflict the lowest possible degree of punishment adapted to the nature of the offence.

In Mr. Huskisson's dispatch "rebellion and rebellious conspiracy" are declared "to be terms unknown to the law of England." If the right honourable gentleman will consult the state trials, he will find the words rebellion, rebels, and rebellious, are very commonly used in the indictments; and also in the litany of the church we pray to be delivered from all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion.

Although it is truly observed that the benefit of clergy is not expressly allowed to slaves by the disallowed act, yet in effect they have the benefit thereof, since there is no crime, punishable with death absolutely under the act, which would be a clergyable felony in England, and the highest punishment, which the law inflicts, may be remitted by his Majesty's representative.

The house do not deny that the punishment, provided for offering violence to a free person, is severe; but such severity is necessary in a community where the slaves vastly outnumber the free. Wherever slavery has existed, it has been thought advisable to protect the persons of free men with the most scrupulous jealousy.

The remarks of Mr. Huskisson on the clause for the punishment of obeah naturally offer themselves to one ignorant of the extent of African superstition, and the horrible crimes negroes will perpetrate, sometimes to gratify revenge, and often to acquire the influence that may enable them to levy contributions on the fears of their more timid fellows. Negroes are seen to pine away to death under the pretended sorceries of the obeah-man, and, where the imagination does not perform the work of death with sufficient celerity, the more certain aid of poison is called in to hasten the fate of the victim. Mr. Huskisson considers that under the next clause many innocent and some meritorious acts are exposed to punishment. But it is submitted that the possession of poisonous drugs by negroes cannot be innocent, unless confided to them by their masters, which fact can readily be proved. To this clause, however, a more precise meaning might be given.

In censuring the indemnification of individuals by the

public for slaves, who have suffered death or transportation under sentence of the law, Mr. Huskisson takes a superficial, and not a fair, view of the act. If the house had conceived that " the crime of the slave is the direct consequence of the owner's positive misconduct," they would not have differed in opinion with Mr. Huskisson; but believing, as they do, that the owner is in no respect to be blamed for the crimes of his slave, they have thought it an act of justice to pay him out of the public purse for that sacrifice of his property, which is demanded by the law for the public safety. Were the public to refuse indemnification to the owners of criminal slaves, the temptation to screen them from justice would be so great, that we should have them and their slaves frequently combining to bid defiance to the law. Nor is it to be supposed that the owner receives by law the full value of the slave; and it is besides the practice of juries, in estimating the value of criminals, to consider their misconduct as a material reduction of their value. The owner has therefore a sufficient interest left in his slave to induce him to continue his protection, until all domestic punishments have lost their effect, and until he becomes a nuisance to his master and his fellow-slaves. Were he even to purchase with the money allotted by law another slave, yet he cannot transfer to the new slave the attachments, the clothes, tools, provision-grounds, and very seldom even the house, of his predecessor.

Mr. Huskisson observes that " the power of remitting the sentences of slaves, condemned to hard labour for life, is to be exercised only when the slave evinces in every respect a complete reformation of manners. I fear that few men undergo such a total change of character as this under any circumstances, and that a prison is among the last places in which it is to be expected."

This provision was intended as a mitigation of punishment to slaves, many of whom are known to have completely reformed in prison. The house are not aware that the reformation, which cannot be expected in a prison, would be in the least forwarded by permitting criminals to go at large. Mr.

Huskisson proceeds to say, " independently of this consideration, I apprehend that this clause may in some degree derogate from the power, which, under his Majesty's instructions, you possess of pardoning offenders, or remitting their punishments."

The power of the governor to pardon remains exactly where it did, and it is believed by the house, that by a common rule of law the prerogative of the crown cannot be effected except by special enactments.

The house, throughout this report, have considered the amended slave act to be finally disallowed by his Majesty; but until the arrival of the order in council, referred to in Mr. Huskisson's dispatch, doubts are entertained in the courts whether their proceedings are to be governed by the old or the new act. In consequence of these doubts, the courts refuse to take cognizance of offences, which are visited by the severer penalties of the law, nor is this confusion of laws the only evil result of Mr. Huskisson's dispatch. Its effect has been felt in the respite and possible escape of a most desperate murderer; and it must be expected that the tranquillity of the slave population will be disturbed by the sudden deprivation of the indulgencies and immunities so lately conceded to them. It is with pain that the house advert to the small regard, that has been shewn to the convenience and peace of the island in the disallowance of this act. The act might have been permitted to expire at the date assigned to it in 1830, without compromising either the royal dignity, or subverting or even interrupting the progress of Christianity. Had this course been pursued, all the beneficial enactments of the disallowed act would have been retained, and the way left open to introduce further amendments from time to time as they became necessary.

The house have now calmly reviewed the reasons, which are given for disallowing the slave act of last session. They cannot pass a new bill, containing the amendments suggested in Mr. Huskisson's dispatch, without sacrificing their independence, and endangering the safety of the island. And,

as the lieutenant-governor is forbidden to sanction such a bill as the house can consent to pass, the slave population must again be governed by the act of 1816. When it shall please his Majesty to withdraw the instruction to the governor, which limits the legislative power of the assembly, the house will once more take the slave code into their serious consideration.

The Speech of the Governor on proroguing the House of Assembly, on the 21st of December, 1827.

" GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCIL,

" MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSEMBLY,

" I have given my consent to all such bills as have been presented to me, and feel much pleasure in relieving you from any further attendance.

" MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSEMBLY,

" I am to return you my thanks for the supplies which you have granted.

" GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCIL,

" MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSEMBLY,

" Should you, on your return to your several parishes, discover any anxiety amongst the labouring class on the subject of the slave act, you cannot too strongly impress upon their minds that their best and surest support and protection will ever be found in the spontaneous kindness and humane disposition of their owners; and that by a mild and discreet exercise of authority on one part, and a cheerful and willing obedience on the other, a reciprocity of good feeling will be established, almost superseding the necessity of legislative controul. You should, above all, endeavour to convince them

that, by persevering in that course of gradual improvement in their manners and habits, which has already been the source of so much advantage, they will every day acquire new claims on the liberality and consideration of the legislature.

"I do now, in his Majesty's name, prorogue this general assembly until Tuesday the 29th day of January next, and it is hereby prorogued accordingly."

No. II.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES.

THE following are the Resolutions of the Wesleyan Missionaries in Jamaica, and of the Committee of the Society in London, referred to at page 140.

WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Disavowal of some Proceedings of Missionaries in Jamaica.

The following Report of Proceedings of some of the Society's Missionaries in Jamaica has appeared in the Public Papers:—

At a Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionaries, held in Kingston, on the 6th of September, 1824, it was unanimously resolved—

First—That the Wesleyan Missionaries of this Island have observed, with deep regret, the numerous misrepresentations and calumnies, which have been circulated concerning their principles and motives.

Secondly—That it has been insidiously stated of the Members of this Meeting—"1. That they believe Slavery to be incompatible with the Christian Religion—2. That their doctrines are calculated to produce insubordination among the Slaves—3. That they are secretly attempting to put in operation means to effect the Emancipation of the Slaves—4. That they are connected and correspond with the Members of the African Institution—5. That they are the most decided (although disguised) ene-

mies of the West Indian Colonies—6. And are enriching themselves by extorting money from the Slaves."

Thirdly—That the Members of this Meeting feel it an incumbent duty to exonerate themselves from these charges, particularly to the Ruling Authorities. They therefore declare, with candour and honesty—1. Their decided belief, that Christianity does not interfere with the civil condition of Slaves, as Slavery is established and regulated by the Laws of the British West-Indies—2. In answer to the Second Charge they reply—that it is what no man living can, or ever could prove, respecting the doctrines taught by any Member of this Meeting; and is, indeed, directly opposed to historical facts, which they could cite: by which it not only appears that not one of the members of their Societies has at any time, in any of the West-India Islands, been guilty of rebellion; but, on the contrary, the Methodists have zealously defended them, in time of danger: and they defy any person to prove the contrary. —3. The Third Charge they most peremptorily deny, before God and man: and moreover *believe, that if the design of the Emancipatists was carried into effect, it would be a general calamity—injurious to the Slaves—unjust to the Proprietors—ruinous to the Colonies—deleterious to Christianity—and tending to the effusion of human blood.* 4. As to the Fourth Charge, the Members of this Meeting most solemnly declare, that they have not the least connection with the African Institution: and, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they are not acquainted with a single Member of that Society; and never have, and, according to their rules, never can correspond with that Institution, or any others, on questions of colonial politics.—5. The Fifth Charge they fearlessly deny; and assert that the individual and collective happiness of their fellow-colonists is, above all things, what they have in view; and are positively assured, by their own knowledge and the observations of some of the most respectable Gentlemen and wealthy Proprietors in the Colony, that their labours have most materially contributed to the peace and welfare of those parts of the Island in which they have been permitted to exercise their Ministry. They, therefore, feel themselves most unjustly treated, by the suspicions expressed of their principles and motives; and are willing to submit to any investigation, that the Authorities of the Island might think proper to institute: and cannot avoid expressing their astonishment, that they should be charged with purposes (in the absence of all evidence) so opposite to their own interests, believing, as they do, that were the views of the Abolitionists carried into effect, their own lives would be endangered, and the property with which they are entrusted most seriously injured if not entirely destroyed. —6. And, to the Sixth Charge, they answer, that there is nothing more false. The sum allowed for the support of each Missionary is fixed by the Committee, according as he is single or married or has children. These expenses differ, as the expenses of living are greater or less in the different Colonies; and are, for a married man without children, from 130*l.* to 250*l.*; and, for a single man, from 100*l.* to 130*l.* per annum; exclusive of expenses arising from house-rent, sickness, removals, or travelling. These allowances are, in part, paid at the older Missions by the public collections made in the Chapels, by the donations of respectable persons, by allowances made by Proprietors as an acknowledgement of their labours on their estates, and by the small weekly subscriptions of such of the members of the Society as can afford it: but, after all, large deficiencies generally remain, to be paid from the home funds, of these very moderate allowances. It is further to be observed, that all the monies raised on the Missions come into the hands of the stewards, who are regularly ap-

pointed from year to year, and who keep accurate accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the station, and transmit them, signed by themselves, to the Committee. No Missionary can raise contributions for himself; nor is he allowed to receive donations, save for the Mission. As to the Charge of extorting or requiring money from the Slaves or others, they state, with honesty and candour, that it is no term of communion to contribute any thing: of the poor Members they expect nothing: indeed many of them receive, month after month, part of what is collected; but many, who can afford it, pay one or two pence per week, and what they are disposed to give at the quarterly visitation for the renewal of their tickets, which is the certificate of continued membership, given or withheld as the character for morality and industry is satisfactory or otherwise. And this is encouraged not so much for the sake of the amount raised, but on the general principle that they consider it a duty of all Religious Societies to assist, as they can, without occasioning any sensible privation, to support their own Religious Institutions; and this makes them take a more lively interest in a work partly supported by themselves: and all Proprietors, whose estates they regularly attend and where Societies are formed, agree with them, that it is better to recognise a principle which is in human nature, and allow these trifling contributions, than for the Proprietor to displace them entirely, by an act of liberality of his own. All is, however, a matter of choice with the Slaves, and only received when they are quite able to contribute it; and there are very few religious Negroes, whose circumstances have not been materially improved by becoming so.

Fourthly—That, while they complain of the calumnies and misrepresentations which have been unjustly heaped upon them, they readily admit that an apology is due, on the behalf of some of those Colonists who have spoken so harshly of Missionaries. It must be allowed that they have had too much cause for provocation from the conduct of the Anti-Colonial Party. The methods taken by that Party, of blending most absurdly religion with politics, or interferring with other men's properties under the profession of Christian Philanthropy, and while claiming to be disciples of the Prince of Peace, doing every thing to spread dissension and anarchy, are utterly destitute of honesty and justice; and not only without sanction from moral principles, but altogether repugnant to the whole Christian Code. It is, however, gratifying to the Members of this Meeting, to know that the Wesleyan Body have not participated in their proceedings; and it is only to be regretted, that, in a few solitary instances, individuals have departed from the fixed principles of the Society.

Fifthly—That the Members of this Meeting acknowledge, with sentiments of sincere gratitude, the obligations which they have been laid under to many Gentlemen in different parts of this Island, for acts of the most disinterested kindness; and it is but just to state, that to the Magistracy of Jamaica their thanks are particularly due, for that good-will which they have generally shewn toward the spread of morality and religion among the Slaves and other classes: and the very few instances of contrary treatment they have been disposed to attribute more to other causes, than a wish to debar the Slaves from the blessings of religion. These sentiments they have always entertained of the Gentlemen and Magistrates of the Colony, and have often communicated the same to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missions;* and they hope, that, while

---

* How comes it that these favourable reports are so little heard of in the mother-country?

Providence spares them to labour in their calling, they shall merit the friendship of all good men who know them, and have always cause to record such instances of kindness.

Sixthly—That, in order to give the fullest publicity to these sentiments and resolutions, to those Authorities more immediately concerned for the welfaro of the Colony, they shall be printed in the form of a Circular; and addressed, most respectfully, to his Grace William Duke of Manchester, Governor in Chief, &c. of this His Majesty's island and its dependencies; to Sir John Keane, K. C. B. Commander-in-Chief, &c.; to Admiral Sir L. W. Halstead, K. C. B.; to the Honourable the Members of His Majesty's Council and of the Honourable House of Assembly; to the Worshipful the Mayor and the Corporation of Kingston; to the Honourable the Custodes, and to other official individuals in the Island; and shall be signed by the Chairman of the Meeting.

(Signed) JOHN SHIPMAN.

A meeting of the Committee of the Society was held, on the 5th of January, at the Mission House in Hatton Garden, to enter on the consideration of these Resolutions, at which Meeting the following proceedings took place:—

Read a printed Copy, transmitted by Mr. Shipman, of certain Resolutions, passed at a Meeting of Wesleyan Missionaries, held in Kington, Jamaica, on the 6th of September, 1824, which have since appeared in the Jamaica Royal Gazette and in some of the London Newspapers.

The Committee unanimously Resolved,

1. That they have no information of the number of the Missionaries in Jamaica who attended the said Meeting; and have reason to think that it was a partial one, and also that it was not a regularly summoned Meeting of the Missionaries in the Jamaica District.
2. That the publication of all Papers, which touch upon civil matters in dispute in the Colonies, or between the Mother Country and the Colonies, is contrary to the Rules under which the Missionaries are bound to act: and that the only instance of disregard to these Regulations which has occurred in any of the Wesleyan Missions, is the case now before us; and which is therefore strongly censured by the Committee, as a violation of this salutary Regulation.
3. That the Committee further disavow the said Resolutions, as not having been passed at a Meeting held under the authority of any of their Rules: and as not having been sent home for their approval, according to an express Regulation.
4. That, in all those parts in which the said Resolutions appear to the Committee to be unexceptionable, they judge such a publication to have been unnecessary, inasmuch as the Missionaries in Jamaica, and elsewhere in the West Indies, are furnished with the authorised publications of the Committee in refutation of the charges so frequently of late made upon the objects and tendency of their labours.
5. That other matters are introduced into these Resolutions, not in the least called

for in order to establish a just defence of the Wesleyan Missionaries in Jamaica, against the violent attacks frequently made upon them in the Public Prints of that Island.

In particular, the Committee are imperatively called upon by this unguarded and improper act of a very few of the Missionaries employed by the Society in Jamaica, to object—

First—To the EQUIVOCAL manner, in which the persons who passed the said Resolutions "declare their belief, that Christianity does not interfere with the civil condition of Slaves, as Slavery is established and regulated by the Laws of the British West-Indies." If no more were meant by this, than that all Slaves, brought under the influence of Christianity, are bound by its precepts to obey their Masters, and submit to the Authorities of the State, conscientiously and constantly, this is no more than the Missionaries have been explicitly instructed to teach, and which the Committee sacredly enjoin upon them to inculcate upon all to whom their ministrations may extend: but if it was intended as a declaration, that the SYSTEM of Slavery, "as established in the West Indies," or anywhere else, is not inconsistent with Christianity, the Committee and "the Wesleyan Body," whose name the framers of the Resolutions have thus presumed to use without any authority whatever, hold no such opinion; but while they feel that all changes in such a System ought to emanate solely from the Legislature, they hold it to be the duty of every Christian Government to bring the practice of Slavery to an end, as soon as it can be done prudently, safely, and with a just consideration of the interests of all parties concerned; and that the degradation of men merely on account of their COLOUR, and the holding of human beings in INTERMINABLE bondage, are wholly inconsistent with Christianity.

Secondly—That the Committee feel bound, in justice, to disavow the sweeping charge made against persons in this country, comprehended under the general terms of "Emancipatists and Abolitionists," in the said Resolutions; as written under evident ignorance of the opinions on that subject which are held in this country, by those excellent and benevolent men, who have of late most distinguished themselves by advocating the melioration of the condition of the Slaves in the West-India Colonies, with a view to the ultimate extinction of Slavery. The Committee, conducting the Wesleyan Missions, take no part in such discussions, as not being embraced by their ONE object, which is to extend the benefits of Christian Instruction among the Black and Coloured Population of the Colonies; but they can never permit any of their Missionaries to use their name and the name of "the Wesleyan Body," in casting censures upon many of the most excellent of their fellow-countrymen, by representing them as holding sentiments on the subject of the Emancipation of Slaves, and forming "designs," which, if carried into effect, would produce the consequences enumerated in the very unguarded and blameable Resolution referred to. The character and objects of the persons, to whom allusions is there made, are too well known by the Committee, for them to suffer such unjust reflections to be given to the world in their name, and not strongly to censure the said Missionaries for thus adopting the language of violent party-men.

Thirdly—That the Committee have read with great grief the very blameable language of the Fourth of the said Resolutions; though they consider the whole to be the production of a very few only of the Missionaries in Jamaica, two of whom had

been placed by the Conference, held in August last, under censure, one being recalled and the other directed to remove from that Island, for the manner in which they had surrendered themselves to the party-feelings excited there in opposition to the measures of His Majesty's Government and the Proceedings of the British Parliament: and that, so far from that Resolution speaking the language of "the Wesleyan Body," as it most unwarrantably professes, that Body, while it has exerted itself for nearly Forty Years to promote the Instruction of the Slaves of the West Indies, and to render them moral and peaceable, has always distinguished itself at home and abroad by its inculcation of the principles of entire obedience to Masters, Magistrates, and all other Legal Authorities; yet, after the example of its venerable Founder, who was among the first, by his writings, to lift up his voice against that long-continued national sin, the Trade in Slaves, has ever regarded the System of Slavery as a moral evil from which the Nation was bound ultimately to free itself; and, throughout the kingdom, has hailed, with the greatest gratitude and satisfaction, the incipient measures adopted by His Majesty's Government, for meliorating the condition of that class of their fellow-subjects. These are measures which, as a RELIGIOUS Body, they have felt a deep interest in; not as connecting "religion with politics," as stated in the Resolution; but as they are essentially connected with the promotion of religion and morals, by regulations which refer to the observance of the Sabbath, to the Marriage of Slaves, and to their general Protection.

The Committee, attentive only to the spiritual concerns of the Missions confided to their management, would not have thus entered upon these topics, had they not been forced upon them by the publication of the Resolutions in question.

They are not unacquainted with the menaces with which their Missionaries have of late been visited in some parts of Jamaica; the obstructions which have been thrown in the way, in some places, to the exercise of their ministry; the refusal of Magistrates, even in the course of the last year, to license their Missionaries, without any legal authority for so doing; and the threats of their expulsion from the Island, which have of late been frequently resorted to: but if the experience of the peaceable effects of their Missions for nearly Forty Years, and the faithful manner in which the Instructions of the Committee, as to the enjoining obedience on Slaves and respect for the Local Authorities, have been uniformly observed by their Missionaries and Societies—facts acknowledged by many respectable and impartial persons both in Jamaica and in the other Colonies, whose continued friendship to their Missions they very gratefully record—are not admitted as sufficient reasons for their protection, they will not seek it in any case by becoming parties to the passions of men, nor suffer their Missionaries to become so: they will not compromise the principles of Christianity, in their legitimate exposition, to obtain favour. In the quiet and simple course of endeavouring to make the Negroes of the West Indies better men, and better servants, and better subjects, they will persevere: and if they suffer for this righteousness' sake, they know the general character of their Missionaries and their Societies in the West Indies so well, that they will suffer patiently, until their case be redressed by the justice of His Majesty's Government, to whom they have never looked for protection, in cases of persecution, in vain. To that protection, and to the public feeling and liberality of this country, they can with confidence leave the Religious Liberties of their numerous Congregations in the West-India Colonies, and those of the Missionaries who are there employed in promoting the best interests of society at large.

6. That Copies of the above Resolutions be transmitted to the Right Honourable Earl Bathurst, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of States; and to his Grace the Duke of Manchester, Governor of Jamaica.

(Signed)

GEORGE MORLEY,
RICHARD WATSON,
JOHN MASON,
} *Secretaries.*

No. III.

RIOT AT ST. ANN'S BAY.

REFERRED TO PAGE 375.

SINCE the first edition of this volume was printed, the attention of parliament has been directed to an attack said to have been made during the Christmas holidays of 1826, on the residence of a Wesleyan minister in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica. The subject was brought before the House of Commons on the 13th of March last, by Dr. Lushington, in a speech from which the following is an extract:

"The transaction to which he (Dr. L.) had alluded, referred to an act of lawless violence perpetrated at the instigation of a clergyman of the church of England, by an armed body, against an individual, as helpless as he was inoffensive. The attack was attended by circumstances of peculiar barbarity, and the case altogether was one that deserved the particular attention of the house.—On Christmas-day last, the militia was assembled in St. Ann's Church, where they were addressed from the pulpit by the Rev. Mr. Bridges, who had been recently chaplain to the Bishop of Jamaica, and who was well known from his publications on other occasions. The house would learn with astonishment, that that gentleman had thought fit to address to the body of men in arms, language the most inflammatory, and openly inciting them to acts of hostility against unoffending individuals; thus desecrating the holy place in which he stood by using it for the purpose of inciting his fellow Christians to acts of riot and bloodshed.—That very evening, or rather night, while the white company of the regiment was on guard, the house of the Rev. Mr. Radcliffe, a Wesleyan Missionary, in which he and his wife and children resided, was violently attacked by a party armed with fire-arms, and fourteen musket balls were lodged within the walls. This attack did not appear to be the result of a momentary ebullition. The firing was continued at intervals, and seemed to be in obedience to the word of command. Dr. L. brought this subject forward, to prevent any interruption in any Colony belonging to this kingdom, of that religious toleration which was recognized by our laws, and of which he had ever been, and ever would continue to be, the advocate. On the Sunday following the outrage he had mentioned, the same clergyman mounted the pulpit, and, alluding to the outrage on Christmas-day, re-preached the same sermon once again. Some honourable members might wish to know who this Rev. Mr. Bridges was? He had first attracted notice by a libel on Mr. Wilber-

force, &c.* Dr. L. then moved, "that there be laid before the house copies of all despatches received from Jamaica respecting an attack on the Wesleyan Missionary, and dwelling-houses, in the parish of St. Ann, in the month of December last."

Of this unfortunate affair the author of these pages could know nothing personally, having been in England at the time; but the following letter regarding it, addressed by his Grace the Duke of Manchester, the Governor, to Earl Bathurst, has since appeared in the newspapers, and is given here not only as it shews the nature and extent of the riot in question, but as it confirms what was stated at page 143, regarding the treatment which Missionaries of all descriptions meet with in Jamaica. Dr. Lushington's speech affords another specimen of the feeling with which the Anti-Colonists are actuated towards the *established* clergy, and of the manner in which stories against the Colonists are magnified and distorted in this country:

"King's House, Jamaica, April 30.

"My Lord—Having observed in a late London paper a motion made by Dr. Lushington, for an inquiry into the circumstances of an attack which is stated to have been made during the late Christmas holidays, on the residence of a Wesleyan minister, residing in St. Ann's Bay, I think it proper to inform your lordship, without waiting for your lordship's instructions to that effect, that no report had been made to me of this unfortunate occurrence, and I have only heard of it casually. As far as I can learn, it was a drunken frolic amongst some of the privates on guard, intended to alarm the Wesleyan Missionaries. I have never heard, nor do I believe, that it was connected with, or in consequence of, the sermon preached by the rector of the parish, but was entirely unpremeditated, however much the outrage committed is to be reprobated and deplored.

"I have lately learned from the attorney-general, that a strict investigation, which lasted many days, took place on the part of the magistrates, assisted by a barrister who was a Wesleyan himself: and no evidence could be brought forward to induce the grand jury to find a bill. Under these circumstances it was deemed prudent to offer a reward of £100 for the conviction of the offenders; and it was hoped, that by appearing to let the matter drop, some of the parties concerned in the riot might be induced to make some disclosures which would lead to the punishment of the delinquents.

"Your lordship is, of course, aware that this event took place after the termination of the session.

"In regard to the sermon preached by the rector of St. Ann, and which is so strongly commented on by Dr. Lushington, I understand that it had been repeatedly preached before in this island; that it was not written by Mr. Bridges, but by the late archdeacon of Colchester. And as it has been stated by Dr. Lushington

---

* See note, page 400.

that Mr. Bridges receives a yearly sum of £500 from the public of Jamaica for a pamphlet which he wrote some years ago, it is only proper that such a mis-statement should be corrected, as the only sum that gentleman ever received from the assembly was £500 sterling, in order to afford him the means of publishing his 'Annals of Jamaica.'

"I shall take care to forward to your lordship such detailed information as I may be able to obtain respecting the affair at St. Ann's Bay. I shall also transmit to your Lordship a copy of Mr. Bridges's sermon. In the mean time I can venture to assure your lordship with perfect confidence, that there has been no participation of public feeling in the outrage there committed; that missionaries of all descriptions are treated with respect and moderation, and any attempt to insult or oppress them would meet with general reprobation.

"I have, &c.

(Signed) MANCHESTER."

"The Earl Bathurst, &c."

No. IV.

EXTRACTS FROM THE CODE RURAL OF HAYTI.

The following extracts from the Code Rural of Hayti, which was passed by the legislature of that island in May 1826, may be usefully compared with the slave law of Jamaica in estimating the advantages which the *free* negroes there are said to possess over the slaves in the English colonies.

Art. 173. The Police Rural has for its object:—

1st. The repressing of vagabondage,

2d. The directing of assiduity in agricultural labour,

3d. The discipline of the labourer,

4th. The making and keeping in repair of the roads, both public and private.

Art. 174. All persons who are not proprietors or renters of the land on which they are residing, or who shall not have made a contract to work with some proprietor or renter, shall be reputed vagabonds, and shall be arrested by the Rural Police of the section in which they may be found, and carried before the Justice of the Peace of the district.

Art. 175. The Justice of the Peace, after interrogating and hearing the person brought before him, shall make known to him the articles of the law, which oblige him to employ himself in agricultural labour; and, after that communication, he shall remand him to prison until he shall agree to labour, according to the provisions of the law.

Art. 176. The Justice of the Peace will allow the person arrested to make his own choice of the individual with whom he is to contract to labour.

Art. 177. If after eight days of detention, the prisoner shall not have agreed to go to field work, he shall be sent to the public work of the town or district where he shall be arrested, and therein he shall be employed until he shall consent to go to field labour. The person who shall detach any labourer from the public works, to employ him in working for a private individual, shall be subject to a fine of 50 dollars, of which a moiety to be paid to the persons complaining.

Art. 178. If the prisoner be a child under age, the Justice of the Peace shall enquire out his parents, and send him to them to follow their condition of life.

Art. 179. After the expiration of three months from the publication of this Code, compulsion shall be used against delinquents.

Art. 180. Every person attached to the country as a cultivator, who shall, on a working day, and during hours of labour, be found unemployed, or lounging on the public roads, shall be considered idle, and shall be arrested, and taken before the Justice of the Peace, who shall commit him to prison for twenty-four hours, for the first offence, and shall send him to labour on the public works for a repetition of the offence.

Art. 181. To provide against vagabondage under pretence of being a soldier.

Art. 182. Officers of the Rural Police shall take care that in their respective sections no person shall live in idleness; for this purpose they have authority to oblige such persons as are not actually employed in labour to render account of their

occupations; and such persons as cannot prove that they are absolute labourers, or keepers of cattle pens, shall be considered as without visible means of procuring their livelihood, and shall be arrested as vagabonds.

Art. 183. Field labour shall commence on Monday morning, and shall never cease until Friday evening (legal holidays excepted); and, in extraordinary cases where the interest of cultivator as well as proprietor appears to require it, work shall be continued until Saturday evening.

Art. 184. On working days, the ordinary field labour shall commence at day dawn, to continue until mid-day, with the interval of half an hour for breakfast, which shall be taken on the spot where the work is carrying on; after mid-day the field labour shall commence at two o'clock, and continue until sun-set.

Art. 185. Pregnant females shall be employed on light work only, and, after the fourth month of pregnancy, they shall not be obliged to do any work in the field.

Art. 186. Four months after delivery, they shall be obliged to resume their labour in the field, but they shall not turn out to work until one hour after sunrise; they shall continue to work until eleven o'clock, and from two o'clock until one hour before sun-set.

Art. 187. No cultivator, dwelling on a property in the country, shall absent himself from the labour assigned him, without the permission of the overseer, in the absence of the proprietor or farmer, and no one shall give that permission unless the case be urgent.

Art. 189. Every act of disobedience or insult on the part of a workman, commanded to do any work to which he is subjected, shall be punished by imprisonment, according to the exigency of the case, upon the decision of the Justice of the Peace of the district.

Art. 190. Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, being at the entire disposal of the labourers, they shall not be permitted, on working days, to leave their work, to indulge in dancing or

feasting, neither by night nor by day. Delinquents shall be subject to imprisonment for three days, for the first offence; for six days, for the repetition of the offence.

The remaining articles of the Code to 194, *are touching the making Roads, and keeping them in repair.*

Art. 194. From the Roll of settlements and habitations, ordered by article 132, the number of labourers, necessary for any particular work on the roads, shall be taken, in proportion to the population of that district, able to work, and every one in turn shall assist in the work.

Art. 196. Every labourer, ordered to work on the Roads, who shall absent himself from that work, shall pay a fine of six dollars a-week, or suffer imprisonment for one week, which fine or imprisonment shall not exempt him from working the week following.

Art. 201. No person, for private considerations, shall abstract from the public works, those sent to labour therein, under a fine of 50 dollars, for every labourer thus abstracted, if it be but for one day. Every morning the overseer of the work of the day, shall call over a list of the labourers, to ascertain their presence.

Art. 202. Labourers, on the public works, shall present themselves early on Monday morning, and shall not absent themselves unless the work be finished, until Friday evening.

Given in the Chamber of the Commons, at Port au Prince, the 21st April, 1826. 23d year of Independence.

MUZAINE, President.

Passed the Senate, the 4th of May, 1826.

P. ROUANEZ, President.

Signed, the 6th May, 1826. BOYER.

By Order, B. INGINAC.

These Clauses are given as more particularly exhibiting the effect of the Code on the field labourer. To exhibit the whole

system by which the Driver is made answerable for the labourer, the Overseer for his drivers and labourers, and the Police in its various grades for the whole, it would be necessary to translate the entire Code.

N. B. During imprisonment, the labourer being absent from field work, forfeits his wages; the pregnant women also appear to receive no wages during their exemption.

ERRATUM.

Page 478, line 10, the reference should be to page 363 instead of 375.

INDEX.

Abolition of the slave trade, good effects of, 127.
Africa, slavery of, 267. 294.
Airs, Negro dance, 12; funeral air, 133.
America, emancipation of slaves in the United States of, 245.
Amusements of the slaves, 10.
Anabaptists, 179. 181.
Animal and vegetable life, exuberance of, in the tropics, 320.
Answer of the House of Assembly to the first message of the governor, respecting the disallowed act, 445.
Anti-Colonists, peaceable and benevolent spirit of the, 283.
Antipathy, alleged, of the white to the black and brown people, *Introd.* xvii. 230.
Attaching the slaves to the soil, 256.
Attempt to murder by poison, 183.

Baptism of Negroes, 128.
Barbadoes, riot, and destruction of a methodist chapel in, 363. 478.
Barham, Mr., on the right of the colonists to compensation, 16.
Berbice, experiment of Negro emancipation in, 336.
Bickell, Rev. Mr., his 'West Indies as they are, or Real Picture of Slavery,' 392.
——— his account of the white people in Jamaica, 413.
Bishop of Jamaica, and John Meabery, 359.
Black troops, 282.
Boyden, Joseph, trial of, for maltreating a slave, 75.
Branding of slaves, 212.
Brougham, Mr., judges of the state of the slaves from the workhouse lists, 173.
——— his opinion of the importance of the colonies as a source of wealth to the mother country, 15.
Burial grounds, negro, description of, 161.
Buxton, Mr., thinks marriage should be *enforced* among the slaves, 100.

Cat, use of the, as an instrument of punishment resisted by the slaves, 42.
Checks and restraint on severity of punishment, 78.
Children of colour, error of Mr. Stephen regarding, 89.
Christmas, how spent by the slaves, 10.

Christopher, St., forty years ago, 293.
Civil society, benefits of, said to be withheld from the Negro slave, 112.
Clothing, allowance of, given to the negroes, 48.
Coasting vessels commanded by slaves, 113.
Code Rural of Hayti, extracts from, 480.
Collins, Dr., of St. Vincent's, Practical Rules, 290.
Colonial and Roman slavery compared, 31. 208.
Colonies, our West India, represented by Mr. Stephen as a great evil to the mother country, 296.
Colonists, character of the, given by Mr. Stephen, 190.
Colony trade, remarks on the, 363.
Colour, importance of educating the children of, 115.
Comfortable circumstances of the slaves in Jamaina, their allowances, &c. 47.
Commercial character of sugar estates, how it affects the slaves, 71.
Compensation, right of the colonists to, 14—Mr. Barham on, 16.
Condemned slaves, indemnification to the owners of, 200.
Cooper, Rev. Thomas, 392.
Corporal punishment, 33.
Crabs, abundant in Jamaica, and Negro methods of catching, 331.
Criminal accusations, trial of slaves upon, 191.
Crisis of the Sugar Colonies, a pamphlet, by Mr. Stephen, 299.
Crop-over, or harvest-home, on a plantation, 10.
Cropper, Mr., the calculations of, on the decrease of the slaves, 330.
Cuba, island of, 144—Instance of the superstition of the people in, 145—Negro provision markets in, 149.

Dallas, Mr., his Negro song, 207.
Decrease of the slave population in the colonies, how to be accounted for, 325.
Defamation of slaves, 101.
Desertion and vagrancy, 163—and going off the island, 165—causes of, 171.
Disallowed act of 1826, papers relating to, *Appendix*, 433.
Disavowal of Wesleyan Missionaries, 472.
Discretionary power of the Judges, in punishing slaves, how interpreted by Mr. Stephen, 188.
Dolly, a slave, anecdote of, 265.
Domingo, St., present appearance of, 141—effects of Negro emancipation in, 335—population of, 339—its armed force, 340—wealth and industry of its inhabitants, 341—exports of, in 1791 and in 1822, compared with those of Jamaica, 343—tonnage of, 344—value of its exports, 345—marvellous increase of population in, stated from official reports in the Edinburgh Review, 359—trade of, 361.
Drink of the Negroes, 174.
Drivers, or Head Negroes, description of the, 38.
Driving system, 299.

Edinburgh Review, strictures on the, 335, 356, 363 — praises Mr. Bickell's pamphlet, 432.
Education of slaves, 113.
Emancipation, difficulties attending it, and effects that would result from it, *Introd.* xx. — how understood by the Negroes, 233 — danger from discussions on, 236 — fatal consequences to the slaves of premature, 244 — of slaves in America, 245 — how to be accomplished, 251 — opinion of the Wesleyan missionaries on the ruinous consequences to be anticipated from, 473.
Enfranchisement for ill-treatment, 73.
Englishmen, are they or free Negroes and Mulattoes the best slave-masters? 21 — change which they are said to undergo in the colonies, 151 — national humanity of, of how old a date, 202.
Established clergy in the colonies, Mr. Stephen endeavours to excite a prejudice against the, 152.
Evidence, best, regarding the state of the colonies, 3 — of slaves, on the admission of, in the courts of justice, 102.
Exports and tonnage of Jamaica, 343.

Feelings of the colonists towards the slaves, 6.
Fish, abundance of, in Jamaica, 317 — Negro methods of catching, 318.
Free persons, the colonists are falsely accused of reducing to slavery, 218.
Freedom, the presumption of law is in favour of, 267 — how understood by the slaves, 233.
Funerals of the Negroes, 131, 158.

Gardens, negro, description of, 303.
Golden Grove Estate, free Negroes on, 234.
Grace, a slave, case of, 88.
Grape, a slave, how manumitted, 275.
Groundless complaints, slaves may be punished for making, 76 — case of groundless complaint, 81.
Grounds, negro, time allowed to cultivate, 28.

Havannah, commerce of the, 376.
Hayti, article in the Edinburgh Review on the state of, 335 — Extracts from the Code Rural of, 480.
Hindostan, slavery of, 33, 276.
Holeing a cane piece, 300.
Hospitals and Nurseries on the plantations, 311.
Houses and Gardens of the Negroes, their mode of life, &c. 303.
Huskisson, Mr., his dispatch, stating objections to the Jamaica Slave Law of 1826, 433 — Report of the House of Assembly thereon, 446.

Illegal importation of slaves, 214.
Improvements in the condition of the Negroes, *Introd.* xxviii. — general improvement in the state of society in Jamaica, and its causes 125.

Indemnification to the owners of condemned slaves, 200.
Jamaica, slaves in, kindly treated and happy, 204—manumission, law of considered, 273—population, exports and tonnage of, 344.

Land-crabs and fish in Jamaica, and Negro methods of catching them, 313—extraordinary production of black crabs in the eastern part of Jamaica, 315.
Laws, to what laws the slaves are subject, 162.
Leasing out of slaves, 65.
Les Amis des Noirs, 142, 335.

Manchester, subscriptions to establish a free school for the uneducated children of colour in the parish of, 117.
Manchester, Duke of, his letter regarding a riot in Jamaica, and attack on the dwelling of a Wesleyan Missionary, 479—His speech on proroguing the House of Assembly, 471.
Manumission, 267—Colonists unjustly accused of putting restraints on, 270—manumission law of Jamaica considered, 273.
Markets, provision, of Jamaica, supplied by slaves, 67.
Maroons, though free for ages, have made no advance to civilization, 336.
Marriage of slaves, 100.
Measles, island of Jamaica ravaged by the, in 1820, 332.
Message of the governor of Jamaica to the House of Assembly, on Mr. Huskisson's letter, 444.
Missionaries, 134—obstacles opposed to, 139—Wesleyan Missionaries in Jamaica, 140, 182, 472.
Mortgage of a West Indian estate does not affect the slaves, 69.
Mutilations, unknown in Jamaica, 74, 192.

Negroes, independent air of the, 50—the colonists charged by Mr Stephen with hatred and contempt of, *Introd.* xvii. 6—funerals of the, 131, 158.
Nurseries, plantation, description of, 311.

Obeah, 185.
Obsolete laws, 183—how used by Mr. Stephen, 202.
Onesimus, case of, Mr. Stephen's comments on the, 6.
Origin of slavery in the colonies, and right of the colonists to compensation, 14—Negro idea on, 232.
Overseers, Mr. Bickell's character of them, and reasons why they do not marry, 414.
Over-working of the Negroes, 309.

Parishes in Jamaica, their extent, and how provided with the means of religious instruction, 121.
Perjury, how punishable, 186.
Philips, Mary, case of, 268.

Plantation management, 37.
Planters, prosperity of the, how it affects the slaves, 60.
Plantains and Edoes, price of, in Jamaica, 48.
Poison, attempt to murder by, 183.
Population of Jamaica, 344.
Port-au-Prince, trade of, 361.
Potting of sugar on Sunday, 427.
Presumption in favour of freedom, 267.
Property of slaves respected, 45.
Protection the slaves have in the self-interest of their masters, 199.
Provision markets of Jamaica supplied by the slaves, 67.
Punishing, master's discretion in punishing his slaves limited by law, 30.
Punishment corporal, 34—seldom inflicted in Jamaica on the day the crime has been committed, 44.

Redemption, right of, 246, 259—Spanish law of, considered, 260.
Registry Bill, 215.
Regulations as to food, clothing, time of labour, &c. 26.
Religious instruction of the slaves, 118.
Removal of slaves from one island or colony to another, 64, 295.
Report from the committee of the House of Assembly, on the governor's message respecting the disallowed act, 446.
Resolutions of the Wesleyan Missionaries, 472.
Riot at St. Ann's Bay, Duke of Manchester's letter respecting, 471.
Roman slavery, 32—and colonial compared, 31, 208.
Rome and Grenada, 281.
Rum, passion of the Africans for, 332.

Sale of slaves, 55—by the Provost Marshal, 58.
Sectarians, why received in the West Indies with distrust, 154.
Self-defence, on what ground it has been said, that the slaves are deprived of the right of, 108.
Shand, the late John, 208.
Slave-masters, are Englishmen, or free Negroes and Mulattoes the best? 21.
Slaves, sold in families and allowed to choose a master, 54—getting into fewer hands and concentrating on the plantations, 60—leasing out of, 65—intercourse of, with free persons, 91—on the legal protection of, 92—not allowed to traffic in the staple of their master's estate, and why, 173—assembly of strange slaves at night, 179—trial of slaves upon criminal accusations, how conducted, 191—good effects of giving them land for their support, 253—will not often buy their freedom, when able, 263—their wealth, 263—removal of them from one island or colony to another, 64, 295.
Slavery, how aggravated in the British colonies, 20—a constrained servitude, but not a service without wages, 26—hereditary, 85—sources of, and illegal importation of slaves, 214.

Society, improvement in the state of, in Jamaica, and its causes, 125.
Spanish colonies, state of religion in, 141, 143—Spanish law of redemption considered, 260.
Speech of the governor on proroguing the House of Assembly, 471.
Spell-keeping, or night-labour on the plantations, 402.
Spirit of West Indian Society, how ascertained by the Edinburgh Review, 356.
Steam engine, negro admiration of the, 232.
Stephen, Mr., consistency of his remarks, 111—his hostility to the established clergy, 152—his contradictory statements regarding the people of colour, 285—founds on old and obsolete laws, 202—while he admits that he has passed over the recent meliorating acts, 288.
Storm of 1815, 322.
Stowell, Lord, his judgment in the case of the slave Grace, 88.
Sunday school for slaves, 120.
Superiority of the white people, how viewed by the Negroes, 232.

Tax upon manumissions in Jamaica, 279.
Taylor, Simon, Esq., anecdote of the late, 52.
Time allowed slaves to cultivate their land, 28.
Trade, colony, remarks on, 363.
Trial of slaves upon criminal accusations, and report of a trial, 191.

United States of America, state of slavery in the, 62.

Vagrancy and theft, 168.
Vegetable life, exuberance of in the tropics, 320.

Washington, General, enfranchised his slaves by will, 62.
Wealth of the slaves, 263.
Wesleyan missionaries, 140, 182.
Whip, used in punishing slaves, 42
Women, negro, pregnant or having young children, work required of, 307.
Work-houses, 210.

THE END.

Printed by Littlewood and Co. Old Bailey.

CB